

# The Arkham Sampler

SPRING, 1949

THE ROOT OF AMPOI  
by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

LOVECRAFT AND THE STARS  
by E. HOFFMANN PRICE

TECHNICAL SLIP  
by JOHN BEYNON HARRIS

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Spring 1949

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# THE ROOT OF AMPOI

by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

A circus had arrived in Auburn. The siding at the station was crowded with long lines of cars from which issued a medley of exotic howls, growls, snarls and trumpeting. Elephants and zebras and dromedaries were led along the main streets; and many of the freaks and performers wandered about the town.

Two bearded ladies passed with the graceful air and walk of women of fashion. Then came a whole troupe of midgets, trudging along with the look of mournful, sophisticated children. And then I saw the giant, who was slightly more than eight feet tall and magnificently built, with no sign of the disproportion which often attend giantism. He was merely a fine physical specimen of the ordinary man, somewhat more than life-size. And even at first glance, there was something about his features and his gait which suggested a seaman.

I am a doctor; and the man provoked my medical curiosity. His abnormal bulk and height, without trace of acromegaly, was something I had never happened to meet before.

He must have felt my interest, for he returned my gaze with a speculative eye; and then, lurching in sailor-like fashion, he came over to me.

"I say, sir, could a chap buy a drink in this 'ere town?" he queried cautiously.

I made a quick decision.

"Come with me," I replied. "I'm an allopath; and I can tell without asking that you're a sick man."

We were only a block from my office. I steered the giant up the stairs and into my private sanctum. He almost filled the place, even when he sat down at my urging. I brought out a bottle of rye and poured a liberal glassful for him. He downed it with manifest appreciation. He had worn an air of mild depression when I first met him; now he began to brighten.

"You wouldn't think, to look at me, that I wasn't always a bloomin' giant," he soliloquized.

"Have another drink," I suggested.

After the second glass, he resumed a little mournfully: "No, sir, Jim Knox wasn't always a damn circus freak."

Then, with little urging on my part, he told me his story.

Knox, an adventurous Cockney, had followed half the seas of the world as a common sailor and boatswain in his younger years. He had visited many strange places, had known many bizarre experiences. Before he had reached the age of thirty, his restless and daring disposition led him to undertake an incredibly fantastic quest.

The events preceding this quest were somewhat unusual in themselves. Ship-wrecked by a wild typhoon in the Banda Sea, and apparently the one survivor, Knox had drifted for two days on a hatch torn from the battered and sinking vessel. Then, rescued by a native fishing-proa, he had been carried to Salawatti.

The Rajah of Salawatti, an old and monkey-like Malay, was very nice to Knox. The Rajah was a teller of voluminous tales; and the boatswain was a patient listener. On this basis of congeniality, Knox became an honored guest for a month or more in the Rajah's palace. Here, among other wonders retailed by his host, he heard for the first time the rumor of a most remarkable Papuan tribe.

This unique tribe dwelt on a well-nigh inaccessible plateau of the Arfak Mountains. The women were nine feet tall and white as milk; but the men, strangely, were of normal stature and darker hue. They were friendly to the rare travelers who reached their domains; and they would trade for glass beads and mirrors the pigeons' blood rubies in which their mountain-slopes abounded. As proof of the latter statement, the Rajah showed Knox a large, flawless, uncut ruby, which he claimed had come from this region.

Knox was hardly inclined to credit the item about the giant women; but the rubies sounded far less improbable. It was characteristic of him that, with little thought of danger, difficulty, or the sheer absurdity of such a venture, he made up his mind at once to visit the Arfak Mountains.

Bidding farewell to his host, who mourned the loss of a good listener, he continued his odyssey. By means that he failed to specify in his story, Knox procured two sackfuls of mirrors and glass beads, and managed to reach the coast of northwestern New Guinea. At Andai, in Arfak, he hired a guide who pur-

ported to know the whereabouts of the giant Amazons, and struck boldly inland toward the mountains.

The guide, who was half Malay and half Papuan, bore one of the sacks of baubles on his shoulders; and Knox carried the other. He fondly hoped to return with the two sacks full of smouldering dark-red rubies.

It was a little known land. Some of the peoples were reputed to be head-hunters and cannibals; but Knox found them friendly enough. But somehow, as they went on, the guide began to exhibit a growing haziness in his geography. When they reached the middle slopes of the Arfak range, Knox realized that the guide knew little more than he himself regarding the location of the fabulous ruby-strewn plateau.

They went on through the steeping forest. Before them, above trees that were still tall and semi-tropical, arose the granite scarps and crags of a high mountain-wall, behind which the afternoon sun had disappeared. In the early twilight, they camped at the foot of a seemingly insuperable cliff.

Knox awoke in a blazing yellow dawn, to discover that his guide had departed, taking one of the sacks of trinkets—which, from a savage viewpoint, would constitute enough capital to set the fellow up in business for life. Knox shrugged his shoulders and swore a little. The guide wasn't much of a loss; but he didn't like having his jewel-purchasing power diminished by half.

He looked at the cliffs above. Tier on tier they towered in the glow of dawn, with tops scarce distinguishable from the clouds about them. Somehow, the more he looked the surer he became that they were the cliffs which guarded the hidden plateau. With their silence and inaccessible solitude, their air of eternal reserve and remoteness, they couldn't be anything else but the ramparts of a realm of titan women and pigeon's blood rubies.

He shouldered his pack and followed the granite wall in search of a likely starting-place for the climb he had determined to attempt. The upright rock was smooth as a metal sheet, and didn't offer a toehold for a spider monkey. But at last he came to a deep chasm which formed the bed of a summer-dried cataract. He began to ascend the chasm, which was no mean feat in itself, for the streambed was a series of high shelves, like a giant stairway.

Half the time he dangled by his fingers without a toehold, or stretched on tiptoe and felt precariously for a finger-grip. The



climb was a ticklish business, with death on the pointed rocks below as the penalty of the least miscalculation.

He dared not look back on the way he had climbed in that giddy chasm. Toward noon, he saw above him the menacing overhang of a huge crag, where the straitening gully ceased in a black-mouthed cavern.

He scrambled up the final shelf into the cave, hoping that it led, as was likely, to an upper entrance made by the mountain torrent. By the light of struck matches, he scaled a slippery incline. The cave soon narrowed; and Knox could often brace himself between the walls, as if in a chimney's interior.

After long upward groping, he discerned a tiny glimmering ahead, like a pin-prick in the solid gloom. Knox, nearly worn out with his efforts, was immensely heartened. But again the cave narrowed, till he could squeeze no farther with the pack on his back. He slid back a little distance and removed the sack, which he then proceeded to push before him up a declivity of forty-five degrees. In those days, Knox was of average height and somewhat slender; but even so, he could barely wriggle through the last ten feet of the cavern.

He gave the sack a final heave and landed it on the surface without. Then he squirmed through the opening and fell exhausted in the sunlight. He lay almost at the fountain-head of the dried stream, in a saucer-like hollow at the foot of a gentle slope of granite beyond whose bare ridge the clouds were white and near.

Knox congratulated himself on his gift as an alpine climber. He felt no doubt whatever that he had reached the threshold of the hidden realm of rubies and giant women.

Suddenly, as he lay there, several men appeared against the clouds, on the ridge above. Striding like mountaineers, they came toward him with excited jabberings and gestures of amazement; and he rose and stood awaiting them.

Knox must have been a singular spectacle. His clothing and face were bestreaked with dirt and with the stains of parti-colored ores acquired in his passage through the cavern. The approaching men seemed to regard him with a sort of awe.

They were dressed in short reddish-purple tunics, and wore leather sandals. They did not belong to any of the lowland types: their skin was a light sienna, and their features were good even according to European standards. All were armed with long



javelins but seemed friendly. Wide-eyed, and apparently somewhat timorous, they addressed Knox in a language which bore no likeness to any Melanesian tongue he had ever heard.

He replied in all the languages of which he had the least smattering; but plainly they could not understand him. Then he untied his sack, took out a double handful of beads, and tried to convey by pantomime the information that he was a trader from remote lands.

The men nodded their heads. Beckoning him to follow them, they returned toward the cloud-rimmed ridge. Knox trudged along behind them, feeling quite sure that he had found the people of the Rajah's tale.

Topping the ridge, he saw the perspectives of a long plateau, full of woods, streams and cultivated fields. In the mild and slanting sunlight, he and his guides descended a path among flowering willow-herbs and rhododendrons to the plateau. There it soon became a well-trodden road, running through forests of dammar and fields of wheat. Houses of rough-hewn stone with thatched roofs, evincing a higher civilization than the huts of the Papuan seaboard, began to appear at intervals.

Men, garbed in the same style as Knox's guides, were working in the fields. Then Knox perceived several women, standing together in an idle group. Now he was compelled to believe the whole story about the hidden people, for these women were eight feet or more in height and had the proportions of shapely goddesses! Their complexion was not of a milky fairness, as in the Rajah's tale, but was tawny and cream-like and many shades lighter than that of the men. Knox felt a jubilant excitement as they turned their calm gaze upon him and watched him with the air of majestic statues. He had found the legendary realm; and he peered among the pebbles and grasses of the wayside, half expecting to see them intersown with rubies. None was in evidence, however.

A town appeared, circling a sapphire lake with one-storied but well-built houses laid out in regular streets. Many people were strolling or standing about; and all the women were tawny giantesses, and all the men were of average stature, with umber or sienna complexions.

A crowd gathered about Knox; and his guides were questioned in a quite peremptory manner by some of the titan females, who eyed the boatswain with embarrassing intentness. He divined at

once the respect and obeisance paid these women by the men, and inferred the superior position which they held. They all wore the tranquil and assured look of empresses.

Knox was led to a building near the lake. It was larger and more pretentious than the others. The roomy interior was arrayed with roughly pictured fabrics and furnished with chairs and couches of ebony. The general effect was rudely sybaritic and palatial, and much enhanced by the unusual height of the ceilings.

In a sort of audience-room, a woman sat enthroned on a broad dais. Several others stood about her like a bodyguard. She wore no crown, no jewels, and her dress differed in no wise from the short kilts of the other women. But Knox knew that he had entered the presence of a queen. The woman was fairer than the rest, with long rippling chestnut hair and fine oval features. The gaze that she turned upon Knox was filled with a feminine mingling of mildness and severity.

The boatswain assumed his most gallant manner, which must have been a little nullified by his dirt-smeared face and apparel. He bowed before the giantess; and she addressed him with a few soft words in which he sensed a courteous welcome. Then he opened his pack and selected a mirror and a string of blue beads, which he offered to the queen. She accepted the gifts gravely, showing neither pleasure nor surprise.

After dismissing the men who had brought Knox to her presence, the queen turned and spoke to her female attendants. They came forward and gave Knox to understand that he must accompany them. They led him to an open court, containing a huge bath fed by the waters of the blue lake. Here, in spite of his protests and strugglings, they undressed him as if he had been a little boy. Then they plunged him into the water and scrubbed him thoroughly with scrapers of stiff vegetable fiber. One of them brought him a brown tunic and a pair of sandals in lieu of his former raiment.

Though somewhat discomforted and abashed by this summary treatment, Knox couldn't help feeling like a different man after his renovation. And when the women brought in a meal of taro and millet-cake and roast pigeon, piled on enormous platters, he began to forgive them for his embarrassment.

Two of his fair attendants remained with him during the meal; and afterwards they gave him a lesson in their language by point-

ing at various objects and naming them. Knox soon acquired a knowledge of much domestic nomenclature.

The queen herself appeared later and proceeded to take a hand in his instruction. Her name, he learned, was Mabousa. Knox was an apt pupil; and the day's lesson was plainly satisfactory to all concerned. Knox realized more clearly than before that the queen was a beautiful woman; but he wished that she was not quite so large and imposing. He felt so juvenile beside her. The queen, on her part, seemed to regard Knox with a far from unfavorable gravity. He saw that she was giving him a good deal of thought and consideration.

Knox almost forgot the rubies of which he had come in search; and when he remembered them, he decided to wait till he had learned more of the language before broaching the subject.

A room in the palace was assigned to him; and he inferred that he could remain indefinitely as Mabousa's guest. He ate at the same table with the queen and her half-dozen attendants. It seemed that he was the only man in the establishment. The chairs were all designed for giantesses, with one exception, which resembled the high chair in which a child sits at table among its elders. Knox occupied this chair.

Many days went by; and he learned enough of the language for all practical purposes. It was a tranquil but far from unpleasant life. He soon grew familiar with the general conditions of life in the country ruled by Mabousa, which was called Ondoar. It was quite isolated from the world without, for the mountain walls around it could be scaled only at the point which Knox had so fortuitously discovered. Few strangers had ever obtained entrance. The people were prosperous and contented, leading a pastoral existence under the benign but absolute matriarchy of Mabousa. The women governed their husbands by sheer virtue of physical superiority; but there seemed to be fully as much domestic amity as in the households of countries where a reverse dominion prevails.

Knox wondered greatly about the superior stature of the women, which struck him as being a strange provision of nature. Somehow he did not venture to ask any questions; and no one volunteered to tell him the secret.

He kept an eye open for rubies, and was puzzled by the paucity of these gems. A few inferior rubies, as well as small sapphires and emeralds, were worn by some of the men as ear-ring pen-



dants, though none of the women was addicted to such ornaments. Knox wondered if they didn't have a lot of rubies stored away somewhere. He had come there to trade for red corundum and had carried a whole sack-load of the requisite medium of barter up an impossible mountain-side; so he was loath to relinquish the idea.

One day he resolved to open the subject with Mabousa. For some reason, he never quite knew why, it was hard to speak of such matters to the dignified and lovely giantess. But business was business.

He was groping for suitable words, when he suddenly noticed that Mabousa too had something on her mind. She had grown uncommonly silent and the way she kept looking at him was disconcerting and even embarrassing. He wondered what was the matter; also, he began to wonder if these people were cannibalistic. Her gaze was so eager and avid.

Before he could speak of the rubies and his willingness to buy them with glass beads, Mabousa startled him by coming out with a flatly phrased proposal of marriage. To say the least, Knox was unprepared. But it seemed uncivil, as well as unpolitic, to refuse. He had never been proposed to before by a queen or a giantess, and he thought it would be hardly the proper etiquette to decline a heart and hand of such capacity. Also, as Mabousa's husband, he would be in a most advantageous position to negotiate for rubies. And Mabousa was undeniably attractive, even though she was built on a grand scale. After a little hemming and hawing, he accepted her proposal, and was literally swept off his feet as the lady gathered him to the gargantuan charms of her bosom.

The wedding proved to be a very simple affair: a mere matter of verbal agreement in the presence of several female witnesses. Knox was amazed by the ease and rapidity with which he assumed the bonds of holy matrimony.

He learned a lot of things from his marriage with Mabousa. He found at the wedding-supper that the high chair he had been occupying at the royal table was usually reserved for the queen's consort. Later, he learned the secret of the womens' size and stature. All the children, boys and girls, were of ordinary size at birth; but the girls were fed by their mothers on a certain root which caused them to increase in height and bulk beyond the natural limits.

The root was gathered on the highest mountain slopes. Its peculiar virtue was mainly due to a mode of preparation whose secret had been carefully guarded by the women and handed down from mother to daughter. Its use had been known for several generations. At one time the men had been the ruling sex; but an accidental discovery of the root by a down-trodden wife named Ampoi had soon led to a reversal of this domination. In consequence the memory of Ampoi was highly venerated by the females, as that of a savior.

Knox also acquired much other information, on matters both social and domestic. But nothing was ever said about rubies. He was forced to decide that the plenitude of these jewels in Ondoar must have been sheer fable; a purely decorative addition to the story of the giant Amazons.

His marriage led to other disillusionments. As the queen's consort, he had expected to have a share in the government of Ondoar, and had looked forward to a few kingly prerogatives. But he soon found that he was merely a male adjunct of Mabousa, with no legal rights, no privileges other than those which she, out of wifely affection, might choose to accord him. She was kind and loving, but also strong-minded, not to say bossy; and he learned that he couldn't do anything or go anywhere without first consulting her and obtaining permission.

She would sometimes reprimand him, would often set him right on some point of Ondoarian etiquette, or the general conduct of life, in a sweet but strict manner; and it never occurred to her that he might even wish to dispute any of her mandates. He, however, was irked more and more by this feminine tyranny. His male pride, his manly British spirit, revolted. If the lady had been of suitable size he would, in his own phrase, "have knocked her about a little." But, under the circumstances, any attempt to chasten her by main strength hardly seemed advisable.

Along with all this, he grew quite fond of her in his fashion. There were many things that endeared her to him; and he felt that she would be an exemplary wife, if there were only some way of curbing her deplorable tendency to domineer.

Time went on, as it has a habit of doing. Mabousa seemed to be well enough satisfied with her spouse. But Knox brooded a good deal over the false position in which he felt that she had placed him, and the daily injury to his manhood. He wished that

there were some way of correcting matters, of asserting his natural rights and putting Mabousa in her place.

One day he remembered the root on which the women of Ondoar were fed. Why couldn't he get hold of some of it and grow big himself like Mabousa, or bigger? Then he would be able to handle her in the proper style. The more he thought about it, the more this appealed to him as an ideal solution of his marital difficulties.

The main problem, however, was to obtain the root. He questioned some of the other men in a discreet way, but none of them could tell him anything about it. The women never permitted the men to accompany them when they gathered the stuff; and the process of preparing it for consumption was carried on in deep caverns. Several men had dared to steal the food in past years; two of them, indeed, had grown to giant stature in what they had stolen. But all had been punished by the women with life-long exile from Ondoar.

All this was rather discouraging. Also, it served to increase Knox's contempt for the men of Ondoar, whom he looked upon as a spineless, effeminate lot. However, he didn't give up his plan. But, after much deliberation and scheming, he found himself no nearer to a solution of the problem than before.

Perhaps he would have resigned himself, as better men have done, to an inevitable life-long henpecking. But at last, in the birth of a female baby to Mabousa and himself, he found the opportunity he had been seeking.

The child was like any other girl infant, and Knox was no less proud of it, no less embued with the customary parental sentiments, than other fathers have been. It did not occur to him, till the baby was old enough to be weaned and fed on the special food, that he would now have in his own home a first-rate chance to appropriate some of this food for his personal use.

The simple and artless Mabousa was wholly without suspicion of such unlawful designs. Male obedience to the feministic law of the land was so thoroughly taken for granted that she even showed him the stange foodstuff and often fed the child in his presence. Nor did she conceal from him the large earthen jar in which she kept her reserve supply.

The jar stood in the palace kitchen, among others filled with more ordinary staples of diet. One day, when Mabousa had gone to the country on some political errand, and the waiting-



women were all preoccupied with other than culinary matters, Knox stole into the kitchen and carried away a small bagful of the stuff, which he then hid in his own room. In his fear of detection, he felt more of an actual thrill than at any time since the boyhood days when he had pilfered apples from London street-barrows behind the backs of the venders.

The stuff looked like a fine variety of sage, and had an aromatic smell and spicy taste. Knox ate a little of it at once but dared not indulge himself to the extent of a full meal for fear that the consequences would be visible. He had watched the incredible growth of the child, which had gained the proportions of a normal six-year old girl in a fortnight under the influence of the miraculous nutrient; and he did not wish to have his theft discovered, and the further use of the food prevented, in the first stage of his own development toward gianthood.

He felt that some sort of seclusion would be advisable till he could attain the bulk and stature which would ensure a position as master in his own household. He must somehow remove himself from all female supervision during the period of growth.

This, for one so thoroughly subject to petticoat government, with all his goings and comings minutely regulated, was no mean problem. But again fortune favored Knox: for the hunting season in Ondoar had now arrived; a season in which many of the men were permitted by their wives to visit the higher mountains and spend days or weeks in tracking down a certain agile species of alpine deer, known as the *okloh*.

Perhaps Mabousa wondered a little at the sudden interest shown by Knox in *okloh*-hunting, and his equally sudden devotion to practice with the javelins used by the hunters. But she saw no reason for denying him permission to make the desired trip; merely stipulating that he should go in company with certain other dutiful husbands, and should be very careful of dangerous cliffs and crevasses.

The company of other husbands was not exactly in accord with Knox's plan; but he knew better than to argue the point. He had contrived to make several more visits to the palace pantry, and had stolen enough of the forbidden food to turn him into a robust and wife-taming titan. Somehow, on that trip among the mountains, in spite of the meek and law-abiding males with whom he was condemned to go, he would find chances to consume all he had stolen. He would return a conquering Anakim, a

roaring and swaggering Goliath; and everyone, especially Ma-bousa, would stand from under.

Knox hid the food, disguised as a bag of millet meal, in his private supply of provisions. He also carried some of it in his pockets, and would eat a mouthful or two whenever the other men weren't looking. And at night, when they were all sleeping quietly, he would steal to the bag and devour the aromatic stuff by the handful.

The result was truly phenomenal, for Knox could watch himself swell after the first square meal. He broadened and shot up inch by inch, to the manifest bewilderment of his companions, none of whom, at first, was imaginative enough to suspect the true reason. He saw them eying him with a sort of speculative awe and curiosity, such as civilized people would display before a wild man from Borneo. Obviously they regarded his growth as a kind of biological anomaly, or perhaps as part of the queer behavior that might well be expected from a foreigner of doubtful antecedents.

The hunters were now in the highest mountains, at the northernmost end of Ondoar. Here, among stupendous riven crags and piled pinnacles, they pursued the elusive *okloh*; and Knox began to attain a length of limb that enabled him to leap across chasms over which the others could not follow.

At last one or two of them must have got suspicious. They took to watching Knox, and one night they surprised him in the act of devouring the sacred food. They tried to warn him, with a sort of holy horror in their demeanor, that he was doing a dreadful and forbidden thing, and would bring himself the direst consequences.

Knox, who was beginning to feel as well as look like an actual giant, told them to mind their own business. Moreover, he went on to express his frank and uncensored opinion of the sapless, decadent and effeminate males of Ondoar. After that the men left him alone, but murmured fearfully among themselves and watched his every movement with apprehensive glances. Knox despised them so thoroughly, that he failed to attach any special significance to the furtive disappearance of two members of the party. Indeed, at the time, he hardly noticed that they had gone.

After a fortnight of alpine climbing, the hunters had slain their due quota of long-horned and great-footed *okloh*; and Knox had

consumed his entire store of the stolen food and had grown to proportions which, he felt sure, would enable him to subdue his domineering helpmate and show her the proper inferiority of the female sex. It was time to return: Knox's companions would not have dreamt of exceeding the limit set by the women, who had enjoined them to come back at the end of a fortnight; and Knox was eager to demonstrate his new-won superiority of bulk and brawn.

As they came down from the mountains and crossed the cultivated plain, Knox saw that the other men were lagging behind more and more, with a sort of fearfulness and shrinking timidity. He strode on before them, carrying three full-sized *okloh* slung over his shoulders, as a lesser man would have carried so many rabbits.

The fields and roads were deserted, and none of the titan women was in sight anywhere. Knox wondered a little about this; but feeling himself so much the master of the general situation, he did not over-exert his mind in curious conjectures.

However, as they approached the town, the desolation and silence became a trifle ominous. Knox's fellow-hunters were obviously stricken with dire and growing terror. But Knox did not feel that he should lower his dignity by even asking the reason.

They entered the streets, which were also strangely quiet. There was no evidence of life, other than the pale and frightened faces of a few men that peered from windows and furtively opened doors.

At last they came in sight of the palace. Now the mystery was explained, for apparently all the women of Ondoar had gathered in the square before the building! They were drawn up in a massive and appallingly solid formation, like an army of giant Amazons; and their utter stillness was more dreadful than the shouting and tumult of battlefields. Knox felt an unwilling but irresistible dismay before the swelling thews of their mighty arms, the solemn heaving of the gargantuan bosoms, and the awful and austere gaze with which they regarded him in unison.

Suddenly he perceived that he was quite alone—the other men had faded away like shadows, as if they did not even dare to remain and watch his fate. He felt an almost undeniable impulse to flee; but his British valor prevented him from yielding to it. Pace by pace he forced himself to go on toward the embattled women.



They waited for him in stony silence, immovable as caryatides. He saw Mabousa in the front rank, her serving-women about her. She watched him with eyes in which he could read nothing but unutterable reproach. She did not speak; and somehow the jaunty words with which he had intended to greet her were congealed on his lips.

All at once, with a massed and terrible striding movement, the women surrounded Knox. He lost sight of Mabousa in the solid wall of titanesses. Great, brawny hands were grasping him, tearing the spear from his fingers and the *okloh* from his shoulders. He struggled as became a doughty Briton. But one man, even though he had eaten the food of giantesses, could do nothing against the whole tribe of eight-foot females.

Maintaining a silence more formidable than any outcry, they bore him through the town and along the road by which he had entered Ondoar, and up the mountain path to the outmost ramparts of the land. There, from the beetling crag above the gully he had climbed, they lowered him with a tackle of heavy ropes to the dry torrent-bed two hundred feet below, and left him to find his way down the perilous mountainside and back to the outer world that would accept him henceforward only as a circus freak.

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### FRAGMENT

by VINCENT STARRETT

Then in the lethal silence of the night,  
Sick with mistrust, as deep in sleep I lay,  
Startled, I heard a joyous organ play  
A theme of stately rapture; and a white  
Intolerable flame shone forth, so bright  
And strange I knew it could not be the day;  
And from my room the walls were snatched away,  
And a white rose of song burned in my sight.

Vibrant, the music gloried down the spheres  
And drew me upward from my sleep to hark;  
Then vanished with the glow: only the beat  
Of my own heart remained; but in my ears  
Fragments of melody, remote and sweet,  
Whispered . . . and all about me was the dark.

# "THE MUMMY!"

by EVERETT BLEILER

Jane Webb was desperate. Her father had just died, and she was left almost penniless, with no obvious source of income. Typing or business stenography was not possible to a girl in the 1820's, and service, to a woman gently nurtured, was out of the question. One activity, though, was sanctioned: writing best-sellers. Perhaps Jane Webb did not know that Fielding had received £1000 for *Amelia*, Mrs. Radcliffe £900 for *The Italian*, Mrs. Inchbald over £1000 for *A Simple Story* and *Nature and Art*, but in any case she knew that there were money and respectability in writing popular fiction, and acted: writing and selling, at the age of 20, *The Mummy! A Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* (London, Henry Colburn, 1827, 3 volumes).

Obviously slanted toward best-sellerdom, *The Mummy!* is an interesting collage of the many disparate elements necessary for wide sales in early 19th century England: an intricately woven plot, patches of interesting and morally improving situations, bright splashes of vicarious thrills, formless gobs of pathos, sublimity, and heroism, and over all a neutral didactic wash. But before we discuss the blending of these many elements, let us discuss the component parts themselves.

The time is the year 2126 "when England enjoyed peace and tranquility under the absolute dominion of a female sovereign", whom we shall later see is chosen by direct popular acclaim. There had been escapades in democracy, true, but these periods of anarchy and despotism had finally been ended in the 20th century when a female member of the deposed royal family accepted the throne and began a matriarchy. Roman Catholicism, in addition had crept out of the Gothic closet, and reengulfed England.

And the world is otherwise greatly changed, as the supernatural being who brings the manuscript from the 22nd century explains:

"... scenes will indeed be different from those you now behold; the whole face of society will be changed; new governments will have arisen; strange discoveries will be made, and stranger modes of life adopted. The restless curiosity and research of man will then have enabled him to lift the veil from much which is (to him at least) at present a mystery; and his powers (both as regards

mechanical agency and intellectual knowledge) will be greatly enlarged. But even then, in his plentitude of acquirement, he will be made conscious of the infirmity of his nature, and will be guilty of many absurdities which, in his less *enlightened* state, he would feel ashamed to commit." (Vol. 1, p. VII.)

Mechanical inventions have increased phenomenally, with steam and electricity two mature sources of power. A steam mowing machine cuts the hay; weather and growing conditions are managed by man; and all agricultural incidents in the life of the harassed plant are decided by the greedy farmer. Steam doctors tend the sick in hospitals, presumably with little more callousness than the human variety, while steam judges and steam attorneys let off hot air rendering justice. Television, which Miss Webb shortsightedly did not associate with alehouses, is a means of communication, and a most interesting postal system kept the civilians alert: cannonball mail, caught in steel nets set up around the country side. A preparatory ball whistles overhead to warn the wayfarer to duck his head. Air travel is common, with balloons the chief vehicle, although other means are hinted at, and for propulsion daring scientists use explosive mercury spirits, which presumably operate in rocket fashion. Or, if the route fits geography, mercury spirits keep the ballon fixed, while the earth revolves beneath. Yet phlogiston holds sway.

And the people are superficially different. Fantastic learning is the prerogative of the lower classes, as in *Intrigue on the Upper Level*, and a butler who says "I obey, I will shake off my somnolent propensities, and speed with the velocity of the electric fluid to the castle of the noble chieftain" is not too gauche and rustic for service in a polite household. Such learning, however, as Miss Webb makes clear, is superficial, and little affects the lower sensibilities which heredity, or Divine Will, has given the menial.

But the plot is not so strange as the background. It is a strange stew: the remnants of *Frankenstein* rehashed, where man is again earnestly adjured not to meddle scientifically with things beyond his power, where the mummy of Cheops, revived by unholy science, serves as does the monster in *Frankenstein* as an active albatross, throttling the dabbler; a clove of garlic from *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*, to disguise the familiarity of the mixture; a sugary Gothic syrup of romance, jilted lovers, stern disowning fathers, where the Mummy is merely a group conscience; and spice in the form of a melo-



dramatic swashbuckling story of court intrigue and international wars on pageant scale. But let us summarize the plot.

Edric is expelled and disowned by his father, Sir Ambrose, for refusing to marry the proper girl at about the same time that his brother Edmund is winning signal victories over the Germans in France. Together with his tutor, Dr. Entwerfen, a clownish genius, he sails to Egypt in the latter's collapsible balloon to find experimental subjects for Entwerfen's electrical contrivances. At the last moment, however, the doctor loses courage, and Edric acts alone, reviving the Mummy, who, in a bewildering scene of wild despair, escapes in Entwerfen's balloon, to be blown by the wind to London. Entwerfen and Edric, meanwhile, are seized by the authorities, tried inquisition fashion, and are condemned to death for sacrilege.

Cheops, arriving in London, has no difficulty in making himself understood, for the universal scholarship renders Old Egyptian a must, presumably, in every school curriculum. The Queen of England has recently died, and two counter-parties strive for queenship: Rosabella, Edric's jilt, and Elvira, a consummation of all that is good in woman. Elvira wins the fickle mob, despite the machinations of Rosabella (who really wasn't good enough for Edric), Father Morris (a nasty monster of hypocrisy, lust, and will-to-power), and the Mummy; and Elvira is well on the way to institute a new golden age. But the conspirators gain power, Elvira is repudiated by the mob, and Rosabella is installed as queen, to begin a reign of such orgies as could occur only to a Gothic writer. Father Morris is almost happy now, for he believes Rosabella to be his illegitimate daughter.

Edric and Dr. Entwerfen, meanwhile, have escaped from the Egyptian prison by means of Entwerfen's universal metal solvent, and sail to Republican Spain, a horrible land, where both are again imprisoned for honoring the tomb of one of Spain's kings. But, at the moment of their execution, Roderick, King of Ireland, who is sworn to restore Spain, throws off his disguise, and rescues them. They join Roderick whose fortunes rise and fall in battle, who is always accompanied by a very emotional page obviously a Greek princess in disguise. Roderick wins out in Spain, reaches England at about the time that Elvira is in greatest danger, rescues her, falls in love with her, and retakes her empire. At a grand finale where all sorts of anagoristic developments take place, Elvira and Roderick pledge their troth; Edric

and Pauline, theirs; and Father Morris, really a renegade noble, not the father of Rosabella, after killing his evil genius paramoor, commits suicide. The Mummy? It interfered in quite a few places, was almost as ubiquitous as Frankenstein's monster; but Edric feels an urge to put down his folly, return to Egypt, meets the Mummy in his tomb, who again warns him against scientific zeal and obligingly turns back into a real mummy, after revealing, in very spoilsport fashion, that God, not Entwurfen's science, had really revived him. *Finis*.

Perhaps Miss Webb's forte is not plot construction, but characterization or atmosphere. Let us examine each.

Characterization is weak. Miss Webb obviously has not learned too much from Fielding or Bage, but has derived much from Scott at his worst, whom she greatly admired as the Great Unknown.

The lesser people, almost without exception, are humours, unipolar groups of tendencies about a single characteristic. We have learned servants and peasants, fanatical republicans in Spain, religious bigots in Egypt (which is so completely lacking in color that Egypt's Nile might be the Thames), and we are hilariously amused at the unconscious humor of the old English sexton, so familiar from Scott and Peacock, who says, when asked to display the Pyramids:

"Ay, that I will with pleasure," returned Samuel; "I've got my living by showing them these fifty years, man and boy; and I know every crink and cranny of them, though I'm old now and somewhat lame. So walk this way, gentlemen." (Vol. 1, p. 212.)

He is a native Egyptian caretaker.

The more important characters, though, are no longer unipolar, but achieve some slight realism by a minor pole opposed to the major pole. Thus, Father Morris, a fiendish monk of Gothic tradition, a Machiavelli, a conscienceless seducer, has one good quality: parental devotion to his supposed bastard daughter. And the loving emotional Princess Zoe of Greece, Roderick's page, so suffers from romantic jealousy that she attempts to kill Roderick and Elvira. Edmund, too, the Fortinbras to Edric's Hamlet, also has moments of passionate jealousy, when he almost plays into the hands of the conspirators. And even goody-goody Elvira, that sweet innocent virgin of the 19th century, has her momentary weaknesses, and is not too good a sovereign.

Atmosphere is a little better, but often does not fit the subject matter. Much of the story attempts a Scott-like historical detachment, and is lacking in personality, while much suggests the pomp, rant, and bombast of the 18th century stage. Where Miss Webb attempts Gothic atmosphere, she usually eschews the fevered frenzy of the Germanic school of English novelists like Lewis, Prest, and Cullen, and ably follows, instead, the pathetic ensorcelments of Mrs. Radcliffe. Miss Webb at her best could ably hint at and sometimes even *name* things unnamable, as in the following Salvator Rose picture:

"This is your guide," said Cheops, in his deep sepulchral tone; "Follow her and you will do well. Farewell! but we shall meet again." Then bending over her, he pressed his lips to her forehead, and to that of Clara.

Both shuddered at the touch of those cold marble lips, and an icy thrill ran through their veins, as the fearful conviction that their companion was no earthly being thrilled in their bosoms. Even the strongest minds dread supernatural horrors, and our fair fugitives turned involuntarily away. When they looked again, the Mummy was gone, and the darkness appeared so profound that they were obliged to grope their way along. Fearing alike to remain or to advance, they proceeded with trembling steps slowly along a narrow passage; their minds filled with that vague sense of danger that generally attends the want of light, when Imagination pictures terrors which do not really exist, and Fancy lends her aid to magnify those which do exist.

By degrees, however, the Queen and her companion became accustomed to the darkness; and as the pupils of their eyes dilated, they were enabled to discern the objects around them. Innumerable fantastic shapes, however, now appeared to flit before them, and grim giants to frown awfully from every corner of the gloomy vault they were traversing. The dim and indistinct light threw a misty veil round the projecting corners of the rocks that gave them a fearful and unnatural grandeur; whilst the fair friends, overpowered with terror, gazed timidly around, and stood a few moments not daring to advance into the darker abysses of the caverns, and yet dreading alike to remain where they were or to return. (Vol. 3, pp. 210, 211.)

Yet Miss Webb does not or cannot attain this mood very often. Would that she did.

*The Mummy!* is damned by that gravest of all literary cardinal sins, tediousness. Miss Webb's intention is too manifold, and her material too disorganized to hold the reader's interest over three volumes. She had hoped to keep the story moving by lurid subject matter and a deft interweaving of subplots, but her subject matter is too trivial and her fabric is too loosely joined



for success. Independent stories remain independent stories despite the overlapping of the characters concerned. Elaborate masquerades, tricks of fate, substitute identities, dramatic revelations, and the Mummy symbol do not hold the reader's attention. The great character delineators of the Augustan Age, Fielding and Bage, did not hesitate to use similar elements, but succeeded because of other strengths. Miss Webb does not succeed. Conquering Roderick with his tinsel campaigns remind us that we are in the battle and dynasty stage of historical theory, but do little else. In the hands of a master the common classical technique of representing the destinies of a nation as a microcosm in one man often succeeds, and convinces, but Miss Webb merely reminds us of the parody campaigns in *Tom Thumb* or *Chrononhotthologos*. Tawdry splendor is not impressive. And Elvira, the sexless heroine, symbol of innocent maidenhood, darling of the people, whom she can move to tears by her oratory. How often have we been disgusted with her in Richardson, the sentimental authors, Dickens, Raabe, and the Victorians. She may lose her innocence, but she can still move multitudes, as M. P. Shiel shows us in *The Young Men Are Coming*. Thank God that Elvira appears somewhat infrequently. Elvira, like so much else, is so dated that it is difficult to appreciate her.

Miss Webb's was the problem of the minor novelist of her day. Attempted solutions were many. The Augustans largely used the constant theme of biography to maintain interest; the Romantics relied upon extremely complicated plots, subsidiary material, and lurid scenes to create a unity of entanglement or mood. Yet the greatest of the Gothic masters seem to have realized almost instinctively that incident in itself was not enough to maintain a full-length horror novel. Walpole remained at short forms, and used a ladder of bizarreness. M. G. Lewis moved into a larger form, had a more efficient stock of German machinery, but attained interest and unity through two means: emphasis on lusty sex, and the tragic fall of a gifted but weak character. Lewis was severely attacked. Miss Radcliffe attempted to retain interest by pathos, a more restraining atmosphere, and a carefully calculated series of frustrated climaxes. And Nathan Drake and Mrs. Barbauld recognized the basic difficulty of maintaining interest over a lengthy horror novel, and remained at fragments, but fragments that are probably worth more than dozens of long Gothic novels.

If Miss Webb had set out to accomplish less, and had contented herself with shorter separate books, or short stories, as Mary Shelley often did, *The Mummy!* might be more than the literary curiosity that it is today.

Miss Webb's subject matter is historically interesting. To the best of my knowledge, *The Mummy!* is the first English novel to capitalize on the Egyptian Old Empire. True, oriental tales had long had a vogue on the continent and in England, stimulated by the arrival of *The Arabian Nights* and similar collections, but the Egypt that appeared in imitation was Moslem Egypt, as Chavis and Cazotte's *Arabian Tales*, Hellenistic Egypt, as in *The Epicurean*, Moore's study of the Mysteries, or Persian or Old Testament Egypt. The Napoleonic campaigns, and Champollion's discoveries undoubtedly stimulated Miss Webb, though it is unfortunate that her knowledge of Egyptian antiquities did not go beyond a few pantheon names of much later date. It was not until Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs* of the Ancient Egyptians appeared in 1837 that reliable information was generally available to the nonspecialist.

Miss Webb's predictions are occasionally farsighted and ingenious, even though they have little to do with the story, and occur chiefly in the introductory chapters. Yet despite the claim of the supernatural messenger, social changes are negligible, and changes in physical changes predominate. We should not censure Miss Webb too severely for this, however, for the best of the modern crop of science-fiction writers fail equally lamentably, and behind them are revolutions in social thought. The insight of Stapledon, the logic of S. F. Wright, and the learning and craftsmanship of H. F. Heard are almost unique even today.

Perhaps Miss Webb has been treated too harshly. It is easy to forget that she was less than twenty when *The Mummy!* was written, and it is difficult to avoid comparing the work of an immature mind with similar products from more adult minds. *The Mummy!* is better than the juvenile romances of Percy Shelley, and indeed more adult, more ingenious, and better written than many of the works of the Gothic period, including the novels of such important figures as William Child Green or William H. Ireland. Yet it is undeniably inferior to *The Monk*, which was also written at a tender age. It is interesting to compare Miss Webb with another precocious female author, likewise with a predilection for fantastic material, Harriet Spofford, of America,

whose *Sir Rohan's Ghost* parallels *The Mummy!* both in vacillating intention (Mrs. Spofford has difficulty in deciding whether the ghost is to be a real ghost or merely a personified conscience) and in adherence to a tradition already passing out of date. Just as Spofford understood her model, Poe, very little, Miss Webb completely misunderstood the formal declaration of war against the Gothic stories with which Scott began *Waverley*. She could not reconvert her easily to writing pure historical romances or novels of manners.

Thus, *The Mummy!* was not exactly a best-seller, though successful, and though reprinted in 1872. It appeared too late. But, Miss Webb did achieve a certain amount of success in her ambitions. *The Mummy!* found one avid fan, John Claudius Loudon, an editor and expert on gardening and floriculture, who contacted her, and married her in 1830. Mrs. Jane Loudon, as she is more familiarly known, spent the remainder of her life writing very capable garden books.

*SED NON SATIATA*  
(After Baudelaire)

by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

Strange goddess, with the hues that darkness gave to thee,  
And the perfume of musk immingled with havana,  
Black magic, made by some black Faust of the savannah,  
Night-born enchantress, flanked with burnished ebony,

At evening I prefer to opium, faithfully,  
Thy mouth where passion flaunts, lifting a philtered urn;  
When theeward my desires in a caravan return,  
Thine eyes are wells where mine unquenchable ennui

Is quaffing . . . From those eyes, wherein thy soul suspires,  
Pitiless demon, pour me not such ardent fires!  
My arms are not the Styx to embrace thee and to bear—

Alas! and never, O lewd Megara, is it mine  
To break thy body's pride and put thee to despair,  
In the hell of thy deep bed a deathless Prosperpine!



*A FEATHER FROM LUCIFER'S WING*

by FOREMAN FAULCONER

I remember, now, that winter's tale,  
Old Granny told the children long ago,  
Candlelit her cabin was; outside the gale  
Swiftly blew in whirlpools falling snow.  
A screaming panther like a woman wept,  
A new-born calf was bawling in the cold;  
Closer to her knees big-eyed we crept,  
To hear her tell the tale she told.

Snow owls drift by on silent wings.  
That scratching at the window is a bough  
Broken by the drifting snow. The kettle sings,  
The distant panther only whimpers now.  
By the fire gleams a giant feather,  
Two feet in length and red as blood it is.  
"Where did you get it?" we cried together.  
"It be'ent mine," said Granny. "It's *his*."

I found it by that hole on Laurel's place,  
That cave that winds so deep into the ground;  
And if you gaze long into it, you'll see a face,  
That flicks a tongue at you, but makes no sound.  
That's where the devil hides, forked tail and nail.  
He's holed in deep till crack o' doom.  
He's mad and switches there his three-haired tail,  
Because I got his feather in my room.

"How long ago, no man can scarcely tell,  
Old Satan, nickerin', was flung into the air.  
There is no countin' of the hours he fell:  
But reaching Laurel's field, he landed there.  
O, what a gash in earth he tore!  
Great rocks were hurled white-hot from out the ground.  
The trees were blasted; none grows there more,  
And about the cave great feathers scattered 'round.

"He found them all but one,—it's on the wall:  
A scarlet feather from Lucifer's loft wing.  
I'll keep it there though he come and bawl,  
And paw the ground and to my chimney cling.  
I found it by the cavern's sooty rim,  
When, as a girl, I wandered there at dawn.  
I knew, at once, that it belonged to *him*,  
It was so bright; I snatched it and was gone.

"It's hung there ever since upon my wall,  
And every year it grows a mite or so.  
Once a winter someone comes to call:  
A beggar after feathers; but I say 'no!'  
I'd never creep too close to that dark hole,  
If I was you and playin' in the suppy weather.  
Just think who lurks below: a smoke-eyed mole,  
Who longs for freedom and his scarlet feather."

"Perhaps, it is a heron's quill," Sue whispered  
when in bed,  
I've seen them in the springtime; their plumes are  
white and red."  
But secretly I knew old Granny in her shawl,  
Whispered before it while it fluttered on the wall.  
Someday, I know, 'twould steal away that ruby-red  
and flashing *thing*,  
To rustle grandly once again in a fallen angel's wing!

# LOVECRAFT AND THE STARS

by E. HOFFMANN PRICE

Since no one thus far has been able to give me the hour and minute of Howard Phillips Lovecraft's birth in Providence, R. I., August 20, 1890, I accepted the challenge (which no full fledged astrologer would dignify by considering it as such) and set to work on the tentative assumption that he'd been born at noon. Upon erecting a chart, I noted that Venus, Uranus, and the Moon, with the two last named in conjunction, were in Libra, and in the Twelfth House.

Inasmuch as those three planets might actually have been in any one of the twelve mundane houses at the time of birth, I checked the delineations for each of the trio, and in every house. After eliminating such absurdities as "Secret love affairs, leading to enmity of women. . . love of horses and large animals . . ." (Venus in XII), and "favors from females . . . fruitful marriage," (Venus in XI), and "Loss of first child . . . inconstancy in love affairs . . . romantic and impulsive attachments" (Uraus in V), and "changeful relations with opposite sex . . . female enmity," (Moon in VII), I came to a delineation for the Third House which gave a close portrayal.

This would suggest that the time of his birth was between 4:00 a. m. and 6:00 a. m. since during those two hours, Venus, Uranus, and the Moon were in the Third House (though, of course, all in Libra; don't confuse a mundane house with a zodiacal sign, of which there are also twelve.)

Next, the Ascendant: Leo would be rising, between 4:00 a. m. and 6:00 a. m. Now, each sign is divided into three *decans* of ten degrees apiece. My problem was to determine which decan was rising. The third decan was clearly not for HPL: "Capable of, and desiring command . . . inclined to hazardous feats . . . rules with a high hand, and is successful over his enemies." The HPL I knew was no such swashbuckler—neither am I, though he always tagged me as such! The second decan, ruled by Jupiter, ascribes to the native "kind, humane disposition", which HPL surely did have, and also, "artistic faculty"; but he did not have a "fortunate and profitable nature, nor fortune in speculation,



nor self-confidence;" and while he "gained by legacy", he won no success through marriage. I need not have checked so closely.

Whatever his qualities were, they were not "Jovial"; he could not have been born during the rising of a decan ruled by Jupiter. But the first decan, ruled by Saturn, (and HPL was Saturnian in his writing of graves, crypts, the sinister and subterranean), was revealing.

"Strong, forceful nature, difficult to control." (No editor ever made him compress a story, or change a comma.) "Poverty and trouble in life; domestic infelicity," which is accurate. "Lack of sympathy in nature"—as kind a man as I ever met, yet he was out of touch with the broad range of human activities, as he himself states in Derleth's *HPL*, in an excerpt from a letter to me. "Austere character, spoiled by false pride." Surely he was austere in the finest meaning of the word, and just as surely was it false pride speaking when he wrote me how repugnant was the very idea of writing for money. "Self imposition and deception will mar the life." He did deceive himself into accepting limitations of his talent. The realism so apparent in his weird fiction would have made him distinguished in the fiction of every day life, which he professed himself to be unable to write, because of his "ignorance". "The native is distrustful of others, and lacking in self-confidence also, yet apt to assert his independence at inopportune moments." Many a MS was kept buried for years, because he lacked the confidence to send it out; one rejection depressed him disastrously; many a MS did finally sell and only because some friend urged, demanded that it be submitted. Yet he would stubbornly refuse to make minor changes or any concession at all. He would not even try to see whether facilitating things for an editor could be done without loss of artistic integrity.

"Much sickness, and a wasting of vital powers; a careful, watchful nature, seldom achieving any great work, but always laborious." Laborious indeed! For twenty-eight consecutive hours, HPL and I sat in my studio in New Orleans, the first time we'd ever met, while he criticized *Tarbis of the Lake*, minutely picking each phrase to pieces; charmingly, affably bringing up the most hair-splitting questions of verisimilitude, and the most remote also. Delightful, yet—laborious, and typical. Careful, too. Only once did I catch him in error: in *The Call of Cthulhu*, he had a police inspector in New Orleans living in a block of a street in the *Vieux Carre* where no residences existed, or could

well exist. Warehouses and the L&N tracks interferred. We had a hearty chuckle on that one!

Already, we have left coincidence in the dust. But let's go further. Saturn is the lord of the first decan; and Saturn is in the fifth degree of Virgo. William Lilly gives this description of one whose "significator", Saturn, is in that sign: "A person of tall, spare body, swarthy, dark or black hair, and it plentiful; a long head, solid countenance; generally unfortunate; inclined to melancholy, retaining anger; a projector of many curious matters to little purpose; studious, subtle, reserved . . ."

As I recollect from a letter, he was five feet, eleven inches tall, though inclined to stoop, and so not looking his height; his hair was dark, though not notably plentiful; whoever has seen his picture as published by Arkham will agree with Lilly's description. I'd hardly call him swarthy, yet considering his sedentary life, he was inclined to be dark, and he had brown eyes.

Birth as early as 3:14 a. m. would exclude Leo as the ascendant; whereas had he been born later than 3:50 a. m., Uranus would have been in the Fourth rather than the Third House. The Uranian influence on the mental qualities would not have been as they actually were, since Third and Ninth notably affect mentality. Had he been born as late as 3:54 a. m., the second decan of Leo, ruled by Jupiter, would have been rising. Jupiter, in this nativity in Aquarius, indicates "middle stature, well set, corpulent, compact . . ."

Now let us fill out the picture: "Sun in the First House: 'Honor and success. A proud disposition; frank, outspoken, generous; independent and firm. Love of display and publicity, accompanied by high motives.'"

"Saturn in the Second House: 'Business losses; thrifty nature; hard work for little gain; sometimes poverty.'"

"Mercury in the Third: 'Much activity; many short journeys; much writing; a busy mind, given to the pursuit of various knowledges, especially literature and science.'"

"Moon in the Third: 'Constant journeys; publicity of some sort; many changes of pursuit and occupation; curious and capricious fancies.'"

"Venus in Third: 'Strong inclination to the fine arts; success in letters and writings; peaceful relations among members of

the family; amiable disposition, bright, fruitful intellect. Poetry, music, singing, and painting\* are among the pursuits of those under this influence.' "

"Uranus in the Third: 'Wayward mind, curious and inventive; unpopular ideas which, if published, only incur severe loss and adverse criticism.' " (This last, if not taken too literally, describes the man's career until he was finally discovered; compared to the big success, in a material way, in the fiction world, his ideas were "unpopular"; and compared to what he might have written, they caused "severe loss" financially. Finally, in Derleth's *HPL* we learn how, in early boyhood, his unpopularity with his playmates drove him to books and study.)

"Mars in the Sixth: 'Inflammatory complaints in the bowels.' (Died of cancer of the intestine.) 'Extravagance in food and dress.' " (Not true—but he never had anything wherewith to be extravagant. However, his oft expressed wish that he lived in the Georgian period, so that he could dress in a way to accord with his tastes, betokened the desire for extravagance.)

'Jupiter in the Eighth: 'Marriage brings prosperity—the partner is or will be rich; gain by legacy; a happy death.' " (He did, I understand, have a small income from a granite quarry. I have had no first hand account of his closing days, or of the day of his death. Marriage brought him no prosperity.)

"Neptune in Eleventh: 'Seductive friends and alliances, unreliable advisors; treachery among supposed friends; losses and troubles thereby. The wife is liable to moral delinquency, sometimes making havoc among the native's friends. Strange and unaccountable attractions and associations.' " (No comment, other than that he was more often than not grossly underpaid for his collaboration-revision service. He considered it vulgar to dicker about splitting the proceeds of a collaboration; the mere thought of discussing the matter of dividing the check for *Gates of the Silver Key* made him squirm. I fancy it was a shock to him when I said, "Take seventy-five percent of the total—twenty-five percent will pay me for doing the typing and blocking out the initial sketch, and the six thousand word first draft.")

Uranus, in Libra, makes the native keen at reasoning, fond of travel, eccentric, ambitious; possessed of imagination, taste, intuition, and aesthetic faculties. Sometimes it leads to hasty

\* *HPL* sketched admirably; did he ever paint?



marriage, with danger of estrangement or divorce. The native is prone to arouse criticisms, rivalry, opposition.

This is a skimpy sketch: it is not synthesized, nor is it keyed to the salient events of his life. My motive for making this investigation was, Lovecraft-like, to test, scientifically, astrology in general, and specifically, the method of "rectifying" horoscopes when the hour and minute of birth are not known. Inasmuch as HPL was one of the most striking characters I have ever known, I reasoned that his chart would contain unusual features permitting a ready "rectification" by working backward, from the personality to the stars, and so deducting the hour of his birth, and the minutes in a bracket not too wide. If through the circulation of *The Arkham Sampler* some HPL friend or relative (if any of these survive) be moved to investigate, and either confirm or contradict that he was born not much earlier or later than 3:50 a. m., I should be greatly obliged.

In closing, I submit this citation from Llewellyn George, the dean of American astrologers: "Your Sun sign in this incarnation will be your ascending sign in the next; that is, your present individuality or inherent qualities will then manifest outwardly as personality; it follows then that the present ascending sign was the Sun sign in the previous incarnation.

"When the Sun sign and the ascendant are the same, it indicates that the individual is repeating the experience (of the previous incarnation) and will continue to repeat until the lessons of life are heeded, and utilized as a step in the 'Jacob's ladder' to ascend toward higher realms of expression."

You will note that the sun was in Leo, 27th degree, and that the 9th degree of Leo was ascending at HPL's birth. From this I can only conclude that HPL in his next incarnation may again be born when the sun is in Leo, and Leo is ascending. For he was an inflexible and unchanging man; neither logic nor poverty could move or budge him, nor could pleas or persuasion. Not a stubborn man, and not an antagonistic man: anything but these—merely, a man who took a position and held that position. To the death and to the uttermost: amiably, pleasantly, cordially, but firmly.

Yet—when Harry Brobst and I bought beer and cooked a pot of East Indian curry at 66 College Street, July 5, 1933, HPL smiled and was friendly about our drinking. He had changed, over the years. There had been a time when the very mention of

beer would have brought out all his sternness and disapproval. Seabury Quinn and HPL, so Quinn tells me, clashed on the matter of a cocktail served in defiance of prohibition. But the Lovecraft I knew was cordial in the presence of imbibers such as Brobst and I. He merely marvelled, as a scientist, that any two men could share six bottles of beer and not fall on their faces. So, HPL may in his next incarnation be born under other signs. And I'd like to be born under such signs that I could see him oftener, and see more of him.

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### THE SAINTS OF FOUR-MILE-WATER

(An Irish Legend)

by LEAH BODINE DRAKE

At Four-Mile-Water down Wexford way  
A graveyard lies, so the legends say,  
Whose earth is holy, clean-free of taints—  
For it's exclusively filled with saints.

Now one would think that there they'd been  
Since St. Patrick saved the isle from sin.  
But no, these head-stones, old and hoar,  
Once stood on the river's *other* shore!

None among them but was of God  
First slept in that green and gracious sod,  
Till on a day (which the saints condemn!)  
A thief was buried to rest with them.

A rogue, a tipster, a roaring blade  
In that sanctified ground was rashly laid,  
To sleep by his betters, that pious throng,  
And molder his bones with theirs along!

The goodly Worships (and faith, 'tis true!)  
Turned in their graves the whole night through:  
What saint could ever sleep on in bliss  
In Devil-owned company such as this?

So the very next night they all arose  
And shook the dust from their burial-clothes;  
And the staring moon, as she ventured low,  
Saw the blessed fathers a-moving go.

Their haloes shining against the sky,  
They lifted their tombstones, and mounting high,  
Over the river the whole band flew  
To settle their bones in pastures new!

The wide-eyed moon stopped in her flight  
To look again at that wondrous sight:  
Each displaced corpse, with his hand to chin,  
Pond'ring the place to bury him in!

Then when the rosy morning broke,  
What a view met the eyes of the village folk!—  
A new graveyard o'er the river made,  
While one lone grave in the other stayed!

A graveyard left with but one green mound  
Where an acre of wasteland stretched around;  
While over the river the grass grew tall,  
And never a thistle at all, at all!

And some folks swear that a mortal wight,  
Passing the place on All Soul's Night,  
Will hear a humming . . . the peaceful sound  
Of the good saints snoring beneath the ground.

Now let no skeptic the legend doubt,  
Nor Christian's word let the godless flout,  
For there lie the graveyards, say what you may,  
At Four-Mile-Water down Wexford way!



# TECHNICAL SLIP

by JOHN BEYNON HARRIS

*"Prendergast," said the Departmental Director, briskly, "there'll be that Contract XB2832 business arising today. Look after it, will you?"*

*"Very good, sir."*

Robert Finnerson lay dying. Two or three times before he had been under the impression that he might be dying. He had been frightened, and blusterously opposed to the idea; but this time it was different; he did not bluster, for he had no doubt that the time had come. Even so, he was still opposed; it was under marked protest that he acknowledged the imminence of the nonsensical arrangement.

It was so absurd to die at sixty, anyway, and, as he saw it, it would be even more wasteful to die at eighty. A scheme of things in which the wisdom acquired in living was simply scrapped in this way was, to say the least, grossly inefficient. What did it mean?—That somebody else would now have to go through the process of learning all that life had already taken sixty years to teach him: and then be similarly scrapped in the end. No wonder the race was slow in getting anywhere—if, indeed, it were getting anywhere—with this cat-and-mouse, ten-forward-and-nine-back system.

Lying back on one's pillows and waiting for the end in the quiet, dim room, the whole ground plan of existence appeared to suffer from a basic futility of conception. It was a matter to which some of these illustrious scientists might well pay more attention—only, of course, they were always too busy fiddling with less important matters; until they came to his present pass, when they would find it was too late to do anything about it.

Since his reflections had revolved thus purposely, and several times, upon somewhat elliptical orbits, it was not possible for him to determine at what stage of them he became aware that he was no longer alone in the room. The feeling simply grew that there was someone else there, and he turned his head on the pillow to see who it might be. The thin clerkly man whom he found himself regarding, was unknown to him, and yet, somehow, unsurprising.

"Who are you?" Robert Finnerson asked him.

The man did not reply immediately. He looked about Robert's own age, with a face, kindly but undistinguished, beneath hair that had thinned and greyed. His manner was diffident, but the eyes which regarded Robert through modest gold-rimmed spectacles were observant.

"Pray do not be alarmed, Mr. Finnerson," he requested.

"I'm not at all alarmed," Robert told him testily. "I simply asked who you are."

"My name is Pendergast—not, of course, that that matters—"

"Never heard of you. What do you want?"

Pendergast told him modestly: "My employers wish to lay a proposition before you, Mr. Finnerson."

"Too late now for propositions," Robert replied shortly.

"Ah, yes, for most propositions, of course, but I think this one may interest you."

"I don't see how—all right, what is it?"

"Well, Mr. Finnerson, we—that is, my employers—find that you are—er—scheduled for demise on April 20, 1963. That is, of course, tomorrow."

"Indeed," said Robert calmly, and with a feeling that he should have been more surprised than he felt. "I had come to much the same conclusion myself."

"Quite, sir," agreed the other. "But our information also is that you are opposed to this—er—schedule."

"Indeed!" repeated Mr. Finnerson. "How subtle! If that's all you have to tell me, Mr. Pendlebus—"

"Pendergast, sir. No, that is just by way of assuring you of our grasp of the situation. We are also aware that you are a man of considerable means; and, well, there's an old saying that 'you can't take it with you', Mr. Finnerson."

Robert Finnerson looked at his visitor more closely.

"Just what are you getting at?" he said.

"Simply this, Mr. Finnerson. My firm is in a position to offer a revision of schedule—for a consideration."

Robert was already far enough from his normal for the improbable to have shed its improbability. It did not occur to him to question its possibility. He said, "What revision—and what consideration?"

"Well, there are several alternative forms," explained Pendergast, "but the one we recommend for your consideration is our

Reversion Policy. It is quite our most comprehensive benefit—introduced originally on account of the large numbers of persons in positions similar to yours who were noticed to express the wish ‘if only I had my life over again.’ ”

“I see,” said Robert, and indeed he did. The fact that he had read somewhere or other of legendary bargains of the kind went a long way to disperse the unreality of the situation. “And the catch is?” he added.

Prendergast allowed a trace of disapproval to show.

“The *consideration*,” he said with some slight stress upon the word. “The consideration in respect of a Revision is a down-payment to us of seventy-five per cent of your present capital.”

“Seventy-five per cent! What is this firm of yours?”

Prendergast shook his head.

“You would not recall it, but it is a very old-established concern. We have had—and do have—numbers of notable clients. In the old days we used to work on a basis of—well—I suppose you would call it barter. But with the rise of commerce we changed our methods. We have found it much more convenient to have investable capital than to accumulate souls—especially at their present depressed market value. It is a great improvement in all ways. We benefit considerably, and it costs you nothing but money you must lose anyway—and you are still entitled to call your soul your own: as far, that is, as the law of the land permits. Your heirs will be a trifle disappointed, that’s all.”

The last was not a consideration to distress Robert Finnerson.

“My heirs are round the house like vultures now,” he said. “I don’t in the least mind their having a little shock. Let’s get down to details, Mr. Snodgrass.”

“Prendergast,” said the visitor, patiently. “Well now, the usual method of payment is this . . .”

It was a whim, or what appeared to be a whim, which impelled Mr. Finnerson to visit Sands Square. Many years had passed since he had seen it, and though the thought of a visit had risen from time to time there had seemed never to be the leisure. But now in the convalescence which followed the remarkable, indeed, miraculous recovery which had given such disappointment to his relatives, he found himself for the first time in years with an abundance of spare hours on his hands.



He dismissed the taxi at the corner of the square, and stood for some minutes surveying the scene with mixed feelings. It was both smaller and shabbier than his memory of it. Smaller, partly because most things seem smaller when revisited after a stretch of years, and partly because the whole of the south side including the house which had been his home was now occupied by an over-bearing block of offices: shabbier because the new block emphasized the decrepitude of those Georgian terraces which had survived the bombs and had therefore had to outlast their expected span by twenty or thirty years.

But if most things had shrunk, the plane trees now freshly in leaf had grown considerably, seeming to crowd the sky with their branches, though there were fewer of them. A change was the bright banks of colour from tulips in well tended beds which had grown nothing but tired looking laurels before. Greatest change of all, the garden was no longer forbidden to all but residents, for the iron railing so long employed in protecting the privilege had gone for scrap in 1941, and never been replaced.

In a recollective mood and with a trace of melancholy, Mr. Finnerson crossed the road and began to stroll again along the once familiar paths. It pleased and yet saddened him to discover the semi-concealed gardener's shed looking just as it had looked fifty years ago. It displeased him to notice the absence of the circular seat which used to surround the trunk of a familiar tree. He wandered on, noting this and remembering that, but in general remembering too much, and beginning to regret that he had come. The garden was pleasant—better looked after than it had been—but, for him, too full of ghosts. Overall there was a sadness of glory lost with shabbiness surrounding.

On the east side a well remembered knoll survived. It was, he recalled as he walked slowly up it, improbably reputed to be a last fragment of the earthworks which London had prepared against the threat of Royalist attack.

In the circle of bushes which crowned it a hard, slatted chair rested in seclusion. The fancy took him to hide in this spot as he had been wont to hide there half a century before. With his handkerchief he dusted away the pigeon droppings and the lesser grime. The relief he found in the relaxation of sitting down made him wonder if he had not been overestimating his recuperation. He felt quite unusually weary . . .

Peace was splintered by a girl's insistent voice.

"Bobby!" she called. "Master Bobby, where are you?"

Mr. Finnerson was irritated. The voice jarred on him. He tried to disregard it as it called again.

Presently a head appeared among the surrounding bushes. The face was a girl's; above it a bonnet of dark blue straw; around it navy blue ribbons, joining in a bow on the left cheek. It was a pretty face, though at the moment it wore a professional frown.

"Oh, there you are, you naughty boy. Why didn't you answer when I called?"

Mr. Finnerson looked behind him to find the child addressed. There was none. As he turned back he became aware that the chair had gone. He was sitting on the ground, and the bushes seemed taller than he had thought.

"Come along now. You'll be late for your tea," added the girl. She seemed to be looking at Mr. Finnerson himself.

He lowered his eyes, and received a shock. His gaze instead of encountering a length of neatly striped trouser, rested upon blue serge shorts, a chubby knee, white socks and a childish shoe. He waggled his foot, and that in the childish shoe responded. Forgetting everything else in this discovery, he looked down his front at a fawn coat with large, flat brass buttons. At the same moment he became aware that he was viewing everything from beneath the curving brim of a yellow straw hat.

The girl gave a sound of impatience. She pushed through the bushes and emerged as a slender figure in a long, navy blue cape. She bent down. A hand, formalized at the wrist by a stiff cuff, emerged from the folds of the cape and fastened upon his upper arm. He was dragged to his feet.

"Come along now," she repeated. "Don't know what's come over you this afternoon, I'm sure."

Clear of the bushes, she shifted her hold to his hand, and called again.

"Barbara. Come along."

Robert tried not to look. Something always cried out in him as if it had been hurt when he looked at Barbara. But in spite of his will his head turned. He saw the little figure in a white frock turn its head, then it came tearing across the grass looking like a large doll. He stared. He had almost forgotten that she had once been like that: as well able to run as any other child, and forgotten, too, what a pretty, happy little thing she had been.

It was quite the most vivid dream he had ever had. Nothing in it was distorted or absurd. The houses sat with an air of respectability round the quiet square. On all four sides they were of a pattern, with variety only in the colours of the spring painting that most of them had received. The composite sounds of life about him were in a pattern, too, that he had forgotten: no rising whine of gears, nor revving of engines, nor squeal of tires; instead an utterly different cast blended from the clopping of innumerable hooves, light and heavy, and the creak and rattle of carts. Among it was the jingle of chains and bridles, and somewhere in a nearby street a hurdy-gurdy played a once familiar tune. The beds of tulips had vanished, the wooden seat encircled the old tree as before, the spiked railings stood as he remembered them, stoutly preserving the garden's privacy. He would have liked to pause and taste the flavour of it all again, but that was not permissible.

"Don't drag, now," admonished the voice above him. "We're late for your tea now, and cook won't half create."

There was a pause while she unlocked the gate and let them out, then with their hands in hers they crossed the road towards a familiar front door, magnificent with new shiny green paint and brass knocker. It was a little disconcerting to find that their way in led by the basement steps and not through this impressive portal.

In the nursery everything was just as it had been, and he stared around him, remembering.

"No time for mooning, if you want your tea," said the voice above.

He went to the table, but continued to look round, recognizing old friends. The rocking-horse with its lower lip missing. The tall fire-guard, and the rug in front of it. The three bars across the window. The dado procession of farmyard animals. The gas lamp purring gently above the table. A calendar showing a group of three very woolly kittens, and below, in red and black, the month—May 1910. 1910, he reflected; that would mean he was just seven.

At the end of the meal—a somewhat dull meal, perhaps, but doubtless wholesome—Barbara asked, "Are we going to see Mummy now?"

Nurse shook her head.

"Not now. She's out; so's your Daddy. I expect they'll



look in at you when they get back—if you're good."

The whole thing was unnaturally clear and detailed: the bathing, the putting to bed. Forgotten things came back to him with an uncanny reality which bemused him. Nurse checked her operations once to look at him searchingly and say, "Well, you're a quiet one tonight, aren't you? I hope you're not sickening for something."

There was still no fading to the sharp impressions when he lay in bed with only the flickering night-light to show the familiar room. The dream was going on for a long time—but then dreams could do that, they could pack a whole sequence into a few seconds. Perhaps this was a special kind of dream, a sort of finale while he sat out there in the garden on that seat; it might be part of the process of dying—the kind of thing people meant when they said "his whole life flashed before him", only it was a precious slow flash. Quite likely he had overtired himself: after all he was still only convalescent and . . .

At that moment the thought of that clerkly little man, Pendl-something—no, Prendergast—recurred to him. It struck him with such abrupt force that he sat up in bed, looking wildly round. He pinched himself—people always did that to make sure they were awake, though he had never understood why they should not dream they were pinching themselves—it certainly felt as if he were awake. He got out of bed and stood looking about him. The floor was hard and solid under his feet, the chill in the air quite perceptibly, the regular breathing of Barbara, asleep in her cot, perfectly audible. After a few moments of bewilderment he got slowly back into bed.

People who wish: "If only I had my life over again." That was what that fellow Prendergast had said . . .

Ridiculous . . . utterly absurd, of course—and, anyway, life did not begin at seven years old—such a preposterous thing could not happen, it was against all the laws of nature—and yet suppose . . . just suppose . . . that once, by some multimillionth chance . . .

Bobby Finnerson lay still, quietly contemplating an incredible vista of possibilities. He had done pretty well for himself last time merely by intelligent perception, but now, armed with foreknowledge, what might he not achieve! In on the ground floor with radio, plastics, synthetics of all kinds—with prescience of the

coming wars, of the boom following the first—and of the 1929 slump. Aware of the trends. Knowing the weapons of the second war before it came, ready for the advent of the atomic age. Recalling endless oddments of useful information acquired haphazardly in fifty years—Where was the catch? Uneasily, he felt sure that there must be a catch: something to stop him communicating his useful knowledge. You couldn't disorganize history, but what; was it that could prevent him telling, say the Americans must about Pearl Harbor, or the French about German plans? There must be something to stop that, but what was it?

There was a theory he had read somewhere—something about parallel universes . . . ?

No. There was just no explanation for it all; in spite of seeming reality; in spite of pinching himself, it was a dream—just a dream . . . or was it?

Some hours later a board creaked. The quietly opened door let in a wedge of brighter light from the passage, and then shut it off. Lying still and pretending sleep, he heard careful footsteps approach. He opened his eyes to see his mother bending over him. For some moments he stared unbelievably at her. She looked lovely in evening dress, with her eyes shining. It was with astonishment that he realized she was still barely more than a girl. She gazed down at him steadily, a little smile around her mouth. He reached up one hand to touch her smooth cheek. Then, like a piercing bolt came the recollection of what was going to happen to her. He choked.

She leant over and gathered him to her, speaking softly not to disturb Barbara.

"There, there, Bobby boy. There's nothing to cry about. Did I wake you suddenly? Was there a horrid dream?"

He snuffled, but said nothing.

"Never mind, darling. Dreams can't hurt, you know. Just you forget it now, and go to sleep."

She tucked him up, kissed him lightly, and turned to the cot where Barbara lay undisturbed. A minute later she had gone.

Bobby Finnerson lay quiet but awake, gazing up at the ceiling, puzzling, and tentatively, planning.

The following morning, being a Saturday, involved the formality of going to the morning-room to ask for one's pocket-money. Bobby was a little shocked by the sight of his father.

Not just by the absurd appearance of the tall choking collar and the high buttoned jacket with mean lapels, but on account of his lack of distinction; he seemed a very much more ordinary young man than he had liked to remember. Uncle George was there, too, apparently as a week-end guest. He greeted Bobby heartily.

"Hullo, young man. By jingo, you've grown since I last saw you. Won't be long before you'll be helping us with the business, at this rate. How'll you like that?"

Bobby did not answer. One could not say: "That won't happen because my father's going to be killed in the war, and you are going to ruin the business through your own stupidity." So he smiled back vaguely at Uncle George, and said nothing at all.

"Do you go to school now?" his uncle added.

Bobby wondered if he did. His father came to the rescue.

"Just a kindergarten in the mornings, so far," he explained.

"What do they teach you? Do you know the Kings of England?" Uncle George persisted.

"Draw it mild, George," protested Bobby's father. "Did you know 'em when you were just seven—do you now, for that matter?"

"Well, anyway, he knows who's king now, don't you, old man?" asked Uncle George.

Bobby hesitated. He had a nasty feeling that there was a trick about the question, but he had to take a chance.

"Edward the Seventh," he said, and promptly knew from their faces that it had been the wrong chance.

"I mean, George the Fifth," he amended hastily.

Uncle George nodded.

"Still sounds queer, doesn't it?" I suppose they'll be putting G. R. on things instead of E. R."

Bobby got away from the room with his Saturday sixpence, and a feeling that it was going to be less easy than he had supposed to act his part correctly.

He had a self-protective determination not to reveal himself until he was pretty sure of his ground, particularly until he had some kind of answer to his chief perplexity: was the knowledge he had that of the things which *must* happen, or was it of those that *ought* to happen? If it were only the former, then he would appear to be restricted to a Cassandra-like role: but if it were the latter, the possibilities were—well, was there any limit?



In the afternoon they were to play in the Square garden. They left the house by the basement door, and he helped the small Barbara with the laborious business of climbing the steps while Nurse turned back for a word with Cook. They walked across the pavement and stood waiting at the kerb. The road was empty save for a high-wheeled butcher's trap bowling swiftly toward them. Bobby looked at it, and suddenly a whole horrifying scene jumped back into his memory like a vivid photograph.

He seized his little sister's arm, dragging her back towards the railings. At the same moment he saw the horse shy and begin to bolt. Barbara tripped and fell as it swerved towards them. With frightened strength he tugged her across the pavement. At the area gate he himself stumbled, but he did not let go of her arm. Somehow she fell through the gate after him, and together they rolled down the steps. A second later there was a clash of wild hoofs just above. A hub ripped into the railings, and slender shiny spokes flew in all directions. A single despairing yell broke from the driver as he flew out of his seat, and then the horse was away with the wreckage bumping and banging behind it, and sundry joints littered the road.

There was a certain amount of scolding which Bobby took philosophically and forgave because Nurse and the others were all somewhat frightened. His silence covered considerable thought. They did not know, as he did, what *ought* to have happened. He knew how little Barbara *ought* to have been lying on the pavement screaming from the pain of a foot so badly mangled that it would cripple her, and so poison the rest of her life. But instead she was just howling healthily from surprise and a few bumps.

That was the answer to one of his questions, and he felt a little shaky as he recognized it . . .

They put his ensuing "mooniness" down to shock after the narrow escape, and did their best to rally him out of the mood.

Nevertheless, it was still on him at bedtime, for the more he looked at his situation, the more fraught with perplexity it became.

It had, amongst other things, occurred to him that he could only interfere with another person's life once. Now, for instance, by saving Barbara from that crippling injury he had entirely altered her future: there was no question of his knowledgably

interfering with fate's plans for her again, because he had no idea what her new future would be . . .

That caused him to reconsider the problem of his father's future. If it were to be somehow contrived that he should not be in that particular spot in France, when a shell fell there, he might not be killed at all, and if he weren't then the question of preventing his mother from making that disastrous second marriage would never arise. Nor would Uncle George be left single-handed to ruin the business, and if the business weren't ruined the whole family circumstances would be different. They'd probably send him to a more expensive school, and thus set him on an entirely new course . . . and so on . . . and so on . . .

Bobby turned restlessly in bed. This wasn't going to be as easy as he had thought . . . it wasn't going to be at all easy.

If his father were to remain alive there would be a difference at every point where it touched the lives of others, widening like a series of ripples. It might not affect the big things, the pieces of solid history—but something else might. Supposing, for instance, warning were to be given of a certain assassination due to be attempted later at Sarajevo . . . ?

Clearly one must keep well away from the big things. As much as possible one must flow with the previous course of events, taking advantage of them, but being careful always to disrupt them as little as possible. It would be tricky . . . very tricky indeed . . .

*"Prendergast, we have a complaint. A serious complaint over XB2832,"* announced the Departmental Director.

*"I'm sorry to hear it, sir. I'm sure—"*

*"Not your fault. It's those Psychiatric fellows again. Get on to them, will you, and give them hell for not making a proper clearance. Tell them the fellow's dislocated one whole ganglion of lives already—and it's damned lucky it's only a minor ganglion. They'd better get busy, and quickly."*

*"Very good, sir. I'll get through at once."*

Bobby Finnerson woke, yawned, and sat up in bed. At the back of his mind there was a feeling that this was some special kind of day, like a birthday, or Christmas—only it wasn't really either of those. But it was a day when he had particularly meant to do something.—If only he could remember what it was. He

looked round the room and at the sunlight pouring in through the window; nothing suggested any specialties. His eye fell on the cot where Barbara still slept peacefully. He slipped silently out of bed and across the floor. Stealthily he reached out to give a tug at the little plait which lay on the pillow.

It seemed as good a way as any other of starting the day.

From time to time as he grew older that sense of specialness recurred, but he never could find any real explanation for it. In a way it seemed allied with a sensation that would come to him suddenly that he had been in a particular place before, that somehow he knew it already—even though that was not possible. As if life were a little less straightforward and obvious than it seemed. And there were similar sensations, too, flashes of familiarity over something he was doing, a sense felt sometimes, say during a conversation, that it was familiar, almost as though it had all happened before . . .

It was not a phenomenon confined to his youthful years. During both his early and later middle age it would still unexpectedly occur at times. Just a trick of the mind, they told him. Not even uncommon, they said.

*"Prendergast, I see Contract XB2832 is due for renewal again."*

*"Yes, sir."*

*"Last time, I recall, there was some little technical trouble. It might be as well to remind the Psychiatric Department in advance."*

*"Very good, sir."*

Robert Finnerson lay dying. Two or three times before he had been under the impression that he might be dying. He had been frightened . . .



## THE LAST AMERICAN

A Fragment

From the Journal of

KHAN-LI

Prince of Dimph-Yoo-Chur and the Admiral in the  
Persian Navy

by J. A. MITCHELL

*Dedication*

To

THE AMERICAN

who is more than satisfied with

HIMSELF

and

HIS COUNTRY

this volume is affectionately

DEDICATED.

## A FEW WORDS

by

HEDFUL,

Surnamed "The Axis of Wisdom,"

(Curator of the Imperial Museum at Shiraz. Author of *The Celestial Conquest of Kaly-phorn-ya*, and of *Northern Mehrika under the Hy-Bernyan Rulers*.)

The astounding discoveries of Khan-li of Dimph-yoo-chur have thrown floods of light upon the domestic life of the Mehrikan people. He little realized when he landed upon that sleeping continent what a service he was about to render history, or what enthusiasm his discoveries would arouse among Persian archaeologists.

Every student of antiquity is familiar with their history.

But for the benefit of those who have yet to acquire a knowledge of this extraordinary people, I advise, first, a visit to the Museum at Teheran in order to excite their interest in the subject, and second, the reading of such books as Nofuhl's *What We Found in the West*, and Noz-yt-ahl's *History of the Mehrikans*. The last-named is a complete and reliable history of these people from the birth of the Republic under George-wash-yn-tun to the year 1990, when they ceased to exist as a nation. I must say, however, that Noz-yt-ahl leaves the reader much confused concerning the period between the massacre of the Protestants in 1907, and the overthrow of the Murfey dynasty in 1930.

He holds the opinion with many other historians that the Mehrikans were a mongrel race, with little or no patriotism, and were purely imitative; simply an enlarged copy of other nationalities extant at the time. He pronounces them a shallow, nervous, extravagant people, and accords them but few redeeming virtues. This, of course, is just; but nevertheless they will always be an interesting study by reason of their rapid growth, their vast numbers, their marvellous mechanical ingenuity and their sudden and almost unaccountable disappearance.

The wealth, luxury and gradual decline of the native population; the frightful climatic change which swept the country like a mower's scythe; the rapid conversion of a vast continent, alive with millions of pleasure-loving people, into a silent wilderness, where the sun and moon look down in turn upon hundreds of weed-grown cities,—all this is told by Noz-yt-ahl with force and accuracy.

ABOARD THE ZLOTUHB  
IN THE YEAR  
2951

*10th May*

There is land ahead!

Grip-til-lah was first to see it, and when he shouted the tidings my heart beat fast with joy. The famished crew have forgotten their disconsolate stomachs and are dancing about the deck. 'Tis not I, forsooth, who shall restrain them! A month of emptiness upon a heavy sea is preparation for any folly. Nofuhl alone is without enthusiasm. The old man's heart seems dead.

We can see the land plainly, a dim strip along the western horizon. A fair wind blows from the northeast, but we get on with cruel hinderance for the *Zlotuhb* is a heavy ship, her bluff bow and voluminous bottom ill fitting her for speed.

The land, as we near it, seems covered with trees, and the white breakers along the yellow beach are a welcome sight.

*11th May*

Sighted a fine harbor this afternoon, and are now at anchor in it.

Grip-til-lah thinks we have reached one of the western islands mentioned by Ben-a-Bout. Nofuhl, however, is sure we are further north.

*12th May*

What a change has come over Nofuhl! He is the youngest man aboard. We all share his delight, as our discoveries are truly marvellous. This morning while I was yet in my bunk he ran into the cabin and forgetting our difference in rank, seized me by the arm and tried to drag me out. His excitement so had the better of him that I captured little meaning from his words. Hastening after him, however, I was amazed to see such ancient limbs transport a man so rapidly. He skipped up the narrow stairs like a heifer and, young though I am, it was faster than I could follow.

But what a sight when I reached the deck! We saw nothing of it yesterday, for the dusk of evening was already closing about us when we anchored.

Right ahead, in the middle of the bay, towered a gigantic statue, many times higher than the masts of our ship. Beyond,



from behind this statue came the broad river upon whose waters we were floating, its surface all aglitter with the rising sun. To the east, where Nofuhl was pointing, his fingers trembling with excitement, lay the ruins of an endless city. It stretched far away into the land beyond, further even than our eyes could see. And in the smaller river on the right stood two colossal structures, rising high in the air, and standing like twin brothers, as if to guard the deserted streets beneath. Not a sound reached us—not a floating thing disturbed the surface of the water. Verily, it seemed the sleep of Death.

I was lost in wonder.

As we looked a strange bird, like a heron, arose with a hoarse cry from the foot of the great image and flew toward the city.

"What does it all mean?" I cried. "Where are we?"

"Where indeed!" said Nofuhl. "If I knew but that, O Prince, I could tell the rest! No traveller has mentioned these ruins. Persian history contains no record of such a people. Allah has decreed that we discover a forgotten world."

Within an hour we landed, and found ourselves in an ancient street, the pavements covered with weeds, grass and flowers, all crowding together in wild neglect. Huge trees of great antiquity thrust their limbs through windows and roofs and produced a mournful effect. They gave a welcome shade, however, as we find the heat ashore of a roasting quality most hard to bear. The curious buildings on either side are wonderfully preserved, even sheets of glass still standing in many of the iron window-frames.

We wandered along through the thick grass, Nofuhl and I, much excited over our discoveries and delighted with the strange scene. The sunshine is of dazzling brightness, birds are singing everywhere, and the ruins are gay with gorgeous wild flowers. We soon found ourselves in what was once a public square, now for the most part a shady grove.\*

As we sat on a fallen cornice and gazed on the lofty buildings about us I asked Nofuhl if he was still in ignorance as to where we were, and he said:

"As yet I know not. The architecture is much like that of ancient Europe, but it tells us nothing."

Then I said to him in jest, "Let this teach us, O Nofuhl! the folly of excessive wisdom. Who among thy pupils of the Imperial

\* Afterward ascertained to be the square of the City Hall.

College at Ispahan would believe their venerable instructor in history and languages could visit the largest city in the world and know so little about it!"

"Thy words are wise, my Prince," he answered; "few babes could know less."

As we were leaving this grove my eyes fell upon an upturned slab that seemed to have a meaning. It was lying at our feet, partly hidden by the tall grass, having fallen from the columns that supported it. Upon its surface were strange characters in bold relief, as sharp and clear as when chiselled ten centuries ago. I pointed it out to Nofuhl, and we bent over it with eager eyes.

It was this:

### ASTOR HOUSE

"The inscription is Old English," he said. "'House' signified a dwelling, but the word 'Astor' I know not. It was probably the name of a deity, and here was his temple."

This was encouraging, and we looked about eagerly for other signs.

Our steps soon brought us into another street, and as we walked I expressed my surprise at the wonderful preservation of the stone work, which looked as though cut but yesterday.

"In such an atmosphere decay is slow," said Nofuhl. "A thousand years at least have passed since these houses were occupied. Take yonder oak, for instance; the tree itself has been growing for at least a hundred years, and we know from the fallen mass beneath it that centuries had gone by before its birth was possible."

He stopped speaking, his eyes fixed upon an inscription over a doorway, partly hidden by one of the branches of the oak.

Turning suddenly upon me with a look of triumph, he exclaimed:

"It is ours!"

"What is ours?" I asked.

"The knowledge we sought"; and he pointed to the inscription,

### NEW YORK STOCK EXC . . . .

He was tremulous with joy.

"Thou hast heard of Nhu-Yok, O my Prince?"

I answered that I had read of it at school.

"Thou art in it now!" he said. "We are standing on the western continent. Little wonder we thought our voyage long!"

"And what was Nhu-Yok?" I asked. "I read of it at college, but remember little. Was it not the capital of the ancient Mehrikans?"

"Not the capital," he answered, "but their largest city. Its population was four millions."

"Four millions!" I exclaimed. "Verily, O Fountain of Wisdom, that is many for one city!"

"Such is history, my Prince! Moreover, as thou knowest, it would take us many days to walk this town."

"True, it is endless."

He continued thus:

"Strange that a single word can tell so much! Those iron structures, the huge statue in the harbor, the temples with pointed towers, all are as writ in history."

Whereupon I repeated that I knew little of the Merikans save what I had learned at college, a perfunctory and fleeting knowledge, as they were a people who interested me but little.

"Let us seat ourselves in the shade," said Nofuhl, "and I will tell thee of them."

We sat.

"For eleven centuries the cities of this sleeping hemisphere have decayed in solitude. Their very existence has been forgotten. The people who built them have long since passed away, and their civilization is but a shadowy tradition. Historians are astounded that a nation of more than seventy millions should vanish from the earth like a mist, and leave so little behind. But to those familiar with their lives and character surprise is impossible. There was nothing to leave. The Merikans possessed neither literature, art, nor music of their own. Everything was borrowed. The very clothes they wore were copied with ludicrous precision from the models of other nations. They were a sharp, restless, quick-witted race, given body and soul to the gathering of riches. Their chiefest passion was to buy and sell. Even women, both of high and low degree, spent much of their time at bargains, crowding and jostling each other in vast marts of trade, for their attire was complicated, and demanded most of their time."

"How degrading!" I exclaimed.

"So it must have been," said Nofuhl; "but they were not without virtues. Their domestic life was happy. A man had but one wife, and treated her as his equal."



"That is curious! But as I remember, they were a people of elastic honor."

"They were so considered," said Nofuhl; "their commercial honor was a jest. They were sharper than the Turks. Prosperity was their god, with cunning and invention for his prophets. Their restless activity no Persian can comprehend. This vast country was alive with noisy industries, the nervous Mehrikans darting with inconceivable rapidity from one city to another by a system of locomotion we can only guess at. There existed roads with iron rods upon them, over which small houses on wheels were drawn with such velocity that a long day's journey was accomplished in an hour. Enormous ships without sails, driven by a mysterious force, bore hundreds of people at a time to the furthestmost points of the earth."

"And are these things lost?" I asked.

"We know many of the forces," said Nofuhl, "but the knowledge of applying them is gone. The very elements seem to have been their slaves. Cities were illuminated at night by artificial moons, whose radiance eclipsed the moon above. Strange devices were in use by which they conversed together when separated by a journey of many days. Some of these appliances exist today in Persian museums. The superstitions of our ancestors allowed their secrets to be lost during those dark centuries from which at last we are waking."

At this point we heard the voice of Bhoz-ja-khaz in the distance; they had found a spring and he was calling to us.

Such heat we had never felt, and it grew hotter each hour. Near the river where we ate it was more comfortable, but even there the perspiration stood upon us in great drops. Our faces shone like fishes. It was our wish to explore further, but the streets were like ovens, and we returned to the *Zlotuhb*.

As I sat upon the deck this afternoon recording the events of the morning in this journal Bhoz-ja-khaz and Ad-el-pate approached, asking permission to take the small boat and visit the great statue. Thereupon Nofuhl informed us that this statue in ancient times held aloft a torch illuminating the whole harbor, and he requested Ad-el-pate to try and discover how the light was accomplished.

They returned toward evening with this information: that the statue is not of solid bronze, but hollow; that they ascended by

means of an iron stairway into the head of the image, and looked down upon us through its eyes; that Ad-el-pate, in the dark, sat to rest himself upon a nest of yellow flies with black stripes; that these flies inserted stings into Ad-el-pate's person causing him to exclaim loudly and descend the stairs with unexpected agility; that Bhoz-ja-khaz and the others pushed on through the upraised arm, and stood at last upon the bronze torch itself; that the city lay beneath them like a map, covering the country for miles away on both sides of the river. As for illuminating the harbor, Bhoz-ja-khaz says Nofuhl is mistaken; there are no vestiges of anything that could give a light—no vessel for oil or traces of fire.

Nofuhl says Ja-khaz is an idiot; that he shall go himself.

*13th May*

A startling discovery this morning.

By landing higher up the river we explored a part of the city where the buildings are of a different character from those we saw yesterday. Nofuhl considers them the dwellings of the rich. In shape they are like bricks set on end, all very similar, uninteresting and monotonous.

We noticed one where the doors and shutters were still in place, but rotting from the fantastic hinges that support them. A few hard blows brought down the outer doors in a dusty heap, and as we stepped upon the marble floor within our eyes met an unexpected sight. Furniture, statues, dingy pictures in crumbling frames, images in bronze and silver, mirrors, curtains, all were there, but in every condition of decay. We knocked open the iron shutters and let the light into the rooms sealed for centuries. In the first one lay a rug from Persia! Faded, moth-eaten, gone in places, it seemed to ask us with dying eyes to be taken hence. My heart grew soft over the ancient rug, and I caught a foolish look in Lev-el-Hedyd's eye.

As we climbed the mouldering stair to the floor above I expressed surprise that cloth and woodwork should hold together for so many centuries, also saying:

"These Mehrikans were not so unworthy as we think them."

"That may be," said Lev-el-Hedyd, "but the Persian rug is far the freshest object we have seen, and that perchance was ancient when they bought it."

On the floor we entered a dim chamber, spacious and once richly furnished. When Lev-el-Hedyd pushed open the shutters and drew aside the ragged curtains we started at the sight before us. Upon a wide bed in the centre of the room lay a human form, the long yellow hair still clinging to the head. It was more a mummy than a skeleton. Around, upon the bed, lay mouldering fragments of the once white sheets that covered it. On the fingers of the left hand glistened two rings which drew our attention. One held a diamond of great price, the other was composed of sapphires and diamonds most curiously arranged. We stood a moment in silence, gazing sadly upon the figure.

"Poor woman," I said, "left thus to die alone."

"It is more probable," said Nofuhl, "she was already dead, and her friends departing in haste, were unable to burn the body."

"Did they burn their dead?" I asked. "In my history 'twas writ they buried them in the earth like potatoes, and left them to rot."

And Nofuhl answered: "At one time it was so, but later on, as they became more civilized, the custom was abandoned."

"Is it possible," I asked, "that this woman has been lying here almost a thousand years and yet so well preserved?"

"I, also, am surprised," said Nofuhl. "I can only account for it by the extreme dryness of the air in absorbing the juices of the body and retarding decay."

Then lifting tenderly in his hand some of the yellow hair, he said:

"She was probably very young, scarce twenty."

"Were their women fair?" I asked.

"They were beautiful," he answered; "with graceful forms and lovely faces; a pleasure to the eye; also were they gay and sprightly with much animation."

Thereupon cried Lev-el-Hedyd:

"Here are the first words thou hast uttered, O Nofuhl, that cause me to regret the extinction of this people! There is ever a place in my heart for a blushing maiden!"

"Then let thy grief be of short life," responded Nofuhl, "for Mehrikan damsels were not of that description. Blushing was an art they practiced little. The shyness thou so lovest in a Persian maiden was to them an unknown thing. Our shrinking daughters bear no resemblance to these western products. They strode the public streets with roving eyes and unblushing faces,



holding free converse with men as with women, bold of speech and free of manner, going and coming as it pleased them best. They knew much of the world, managed their own affairs, and devised their own marriages, often changing their minds and marrying another than the betrothed."

"Bismillah! And men could love these things?" exclaimed Lev-el-Hedyd with much feeling.

"So it appears."

"But I should say the Mehrikan bride had much the freshness of a dried fig."

"So she had," said Nofuhl, "but those who know only the dried fig have no regret for the fresh fruit. But the fault was not with the maidens. Brought up like boys, with the same studies and mental development, the womanly part of their nature gradually vanished as their minds expanded. Vigor of intellect was the object of a woman's education."

Then Lev-el-Hedyd exclaimed with great disgust:

"Praises be to Allah for his aid in exterminating such a people!" and he walked away from the bed, and began looking about the chamber. In a moment he hastened back to us, saying:

"Here are more jewels! also money!"

Nofuhl eagerly took the pieces.

"Money!" he cried. "Money will tell us more than pages of history!"

There were silver coins of different sizes and two small pieces of copper. Nofuhl studied them closely.

"The latest date is 1937," he said; "a little more than a thousand years ago; but the piece may have been in circulation some years before this woman died; also it may have been coined the very year of her death. It bears the head of Dennis, the last of the Hy-Burnyan dictators. The race is supposed to have become extinct before 1990 of their era."

I then said:

"Thou hast never told us, O Nofuhl! the cause of their disappearance."

"There were many causes," he answered. "The Mehrikans themselves were of English origin, but people from all parts of Europe came here in vast numbers. Although the original comers were vigorous and hardy the effect of climate upon succeeding generations was fatal. They became flat-chested and thin, with scanty hair, fragile teeth, and weak digestions. Nervous diseases

unknown to us wrought deadly havoc. Children were reared with difficulty. Between 1925 and 1940, the last census of which any record remains, the population decreased from ninety millions to less than twelve millions. Climatic changes, the like of which no other land ever experienced, began at that period, and finished in less than ten years a work made easy by nervous temperaments and rapid lives. The temperature would skip in a single day from burning heat to winter's cold. No constitution could withstand it, and this vast continent became once more an empty wilderness."

Much more of the same nature he told us, but I am too sleepy to write longer. We explored the rest of the mansion, finding many things of interest. I caused several objects to be carried aboard the *Zlotuhb*.\*

14th May

Hotter than yesterday.

In the afternoon we were rowed up the river and landed for a short walk. It is unsafe to brave the sun.

The more I learn of these Mehrikans the less interesting they become. Nofuhl is of much the same mind, judging from our conversation today, as we walked along together.

It was in this wise:

*Khan-li.*

How alike the houses! How monotonous!

*Nofuhl.*

So, also, were the occupants. They thought alike, worked alike, ate, dressed and conversed alike. They read the same books; they fashioned their garments as directed, with no regard for the size or figure of the individual, and copied to a stitch the fashions of Europeans.

*Khan-li.*

But the close-fitting apparel of the European must have been sadly uncomfortable in the heat of a Mehrikan summer.

*Nofuhl.*

So probably it was. Stiff boxes of varying pattern adorned the heads of men. Curious jackets with tight sleeves encased the body. The feet throbbed and burned in close-fitting casings of unyielding leather and linen made stiff by artificial means was drawn tightly about the neck.

\* These objects are now in the museum of the Imperial College, at Teheran.

*Khan-li.*

Allah! What idiots!

*Nofuhl.*

Even so are they considered.

*Khan-li.*

To what quality of their minds do you attribute such love of needless suffering?

*Nofuhl.*

It was their desire to be like others. A natural feeling in a vulgar people.

*15th May*

A fair wind from the west today. We weighed anchor and sailed up the eastern side of the city. I did this as Nofuhl finds the upper portion of the town much richer in relics than the lower, which seems to have been given up to commercial purposes. We sailed close under one of the great monuments in the river, and are at a loss to devine its meaning. Many iron rods still dangle from the tops of each of the structures. As they are in a line, one with the other, we thought at first they might have been once connected and served as a bridge, but we soon saw they were too far apart.

Came to anchor about three miles from the old mooring. Up the river and down, north, south, east and west, the ruins stretch away indefinitely, seemingly without end.

Am anxious about Lev-el-Hedyd. He went ashore and has not returned. It is now after midnight.

*16th May*

Praise Allah! my dear comrade is alive! This morning we landed early and began our search for him. As we passed before the brick building which bears the inscription

DELMONICO

high up upon its front, we heard his voice from within in answer to our calls. We entered, and after climbing the ruined stairway found him seated upon the floor above. He had a swollen leg from an ugly sprain, and various bruises were also his. While the others were constructing a litter on which to bear him hence we conversed together. The walls about us bore traces of having once enclosed a hall of some beauty. In idling about I pulled open the decaying door of an old closet and saw upon the rotting shelves many pieces of glass and earthenware of fine workmanship. Taking one in my hand, a small wine-cup of glass, I ap-



proached my comrade calling his attention to its slender stem and curious form. As his eyes fell upon it they opened wide in amazement. I also observed a trembling hand as he reached forth to touch it. He then recounted to me his marvellous adventure of the night before, but saying before he began:

"Thou knowest, O Prince, I am no believer in visions, and I should never tell the tale but for thy discovery of this cup. I drank from such an one last night, proffered by a ghostly hand."

I would have smiled, but he was much in earnest. As I made a movement to sit beside him, he said:

"Taste first, O my master, of the grapes hanging from yonder wall."

I did so, and to my great surprise found them of an exquisite flavor, finer even than the cultivated fruit of Persia, sweeter and more delicate, of a different nature from the wild grapes we have been eating. My astonishment appeared to delight him, and he said with a laugh:

"The grapes are impossible, but they exist; even more absurd is my story!" and then narrated his adventure.

It was this:

#### WHAT LEV-EL-HEDYD SAW

Yesterday, after nightfall, as he was hastening toward the *Zlotuhb*, he fell violently upon some blocks of stone, wrenching his ankle and much bruising himself. Unable to walk upon his foot he limped into this building to await our coming in the morning. The howling of wolves and other wild beasts as they prowled about about the city drove him, for safety, to crawl up the ruins of the stairway to the floor above. As he settled himself in a corner of this hall his nostrils were greeted with the delicious odor from the grapes above his head. He found them surprisingly good, and ate heartily. He soon after fell into a sleep which lasted some hours, for when he awoke the moon was higher in the heavens, the voices of the wolves were hushed and the city was silent.

As he lay in a reverie, much absorbed in his own thoughts, he gradually became aware of mysterious changes taking place, as if by stealth, about him. A decorated ceiling appeared to be closing over the hall. Mirrors and tinted walls slowly crept in place of ivy and crumbling bricks. A faint glow grew stronger and more intense until it filled the great room with a dazzling light.

Then came softly into view a table of curious form, set out with flowers and innumerable dishes of glass and porcelain, as for a feast.

Standing about the room he saw solemn men with beardless faces, all in black attire, whose garments bore triangular openings upon the chest to show the shirt beneath. These personages he soon discovered were servants.

As he gazed in bewilderment, there entered other figures, two by two, who took their seats about the table. These later comers, sixty or more, were men and women walking arm in arm, the women in rich attire of unfamiliar fashion and sparkling with precious stones. The men were clad like the servants.

They ate and drank and laughed, and formed a brilliant scene. Lev-el-Hedyd rose to his feet, and moved by a curiosity he made no effort to resist,—for he is a reckless fellow and knows no fear—he hobbled out into the room.

They looked upon him in surprise, and seemed much amused at his presence. One of the guests, a tall youth with yellow mustaches, approached him, offering a delicate crystal vessel filled with a sparkling fluid.

Lev-el-Hedyd took it.

The youth raised another from the table, and with a slight gesture as if in salutation, he said in words which my comrade understood, though he swears it was a language unknown to him, "We may meet again the fourth of next month."

He then drank the wine, and so did Lev-el-Hedyd.

Hereupon the others smiled as if at their comrade's wit, all save the women, whose tender faces spoke more of pity than of mirth. The wine flew to his brain as he drank it, and things about him seemed to reel and spin. Strains of fantastic music burst upon his ears, then, all in rhythm, the women joined their partners and whirled about him with a lightsome step. And, moving with it, his throbbing brain seemed dancing from his head. The room itself, all swaying and quivering with the melody, grew dim and stole from view. The music softly died away.

Again was silence, the moon above looking calmly down upon the ivied walls.

He fell like a drunken man upon the floor, and did not wake till our voices called him.

Such his tale.

He has a clear head and is no liar, but so many grapes upon an empty stomach with the fever from his swollen limb might well explain it.

\* \* \* \*

Bear's meat for dinner.

This morning toward noon Kuzundam, the second officer, wandered on ahead of us, and entered a large building in pursuit of a rabbit. He was about descending to the basement below, when he saw, close before him, a bear leisurely mounting the marble stairs. Kuzundam is no coward, but he turned and ran as he never ran before. The bear, who seemed of a sportive nature, also ran, and in close pursuit of our friend. Luckily for my friend we happened to be near, otherwise instead of our eating bear's meat, the bear might have lunched quietly off Kuzundam in the shady corridors of the "Fifthavenuehotel."

*17th May*

Today a scorching heat that burns the lungs. We started in the morning prepared to spend the night ashore, and explore the northern end of the city. It was a pleasant walk through the soft grass of the shady streets, but in those places unsheltered from the sun we were as fish upon a frying-pan. Other dwellings we saw, even larger and more imposing than the one we entered yesterday. We were tempted to explore them, but Lev-el-Hedyd wisely dissuaded us, saying the day was waxing hotter each hour and it could be done on our return.

In the northern part of the town are many religious temples, with their tall towers like slender pyramids, tapering to a point. They are curious things, and surprisingly well preserved. The interiors of these temples are uninteresting. Nofuhl says the religious rites of the Mehrikans were devoid of character. There were many religious beliefs, all complicated and insignificant variations one from another, each having its own temples and refusing to believe as the others. This is amusing to a Persian, but mayhap was a serious matter with them. One day in each week they assembled, the priests reading long moral lectures written by themselves, with music by hired singers. They then separated, taking no thought of temple or priest for another seven days. Nofuhl says they were not a religious people. That the temples were filled mostly with women.

In the afternoon we found it necessary to traverse a vast pleasure-ground, now a wild forest, but with traces still visible of broad



promenades and winding driveways.\* There remains an avenue of bronze statues, most of them yet upright and in good condition, but very comic. Lev-el-Hedyd and I still think them caricatures, but Nofuhl is positive they were serious efforts, and says the Mehrikans were easily pleased in matters of art.

We lost our way in this park, having nothing to guide us as in the streets of the city. This was most happy, as otherwise we should have missed a surprising discovery.

It occurred in this wise.

Being somewhat overcome by the heat we halted upon a little hill to rest ourselves. While reclining beneath the trees I noticed unusual carvings upon a huge block against which Lev-el-Hedyd was supporting his back. They were unlike any we had seen, and yet they were not unfamiliar. As I lay there gazing idly at them it flashed upon me they were Egyptian. We at once fell to examining the block, and found to our amazement an obelisk of Egyptian granite, covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics of an antiquity exceeding by thousands of years the most ancient monuments of the country!

Verily, we were puzzled!

"When did the Egyptians invade Mehrika?" quoth Bhoz-jakhaz, with a solemn look, as if trying to recall a date.

"No Egyptian ever heard of Mehrika," said Nofuhl. "This obelisk was finished twenty centuries before the first Mehrikan was weaned. In all probability it was brought here as a curiosity, just as we take to Persia the bronze head of George-wash-yn-tun."

We spent much time over the monument, and I think Nofuhl was disappointed that he could not bring it away with him.

Also while in this park we came to a high tower, standing by itself, and climbed to the top, where we enjoyed a wide-spreading view.

The extent of the city is astounding.

Miles away in the river lay the *Zlotuhb*, a white speck on the water. All about us in every direction as far as sight can reach were ruins, and ruins, and ruins. Never was a more melancholy sight. The blue sky, the bright sunshine, the sweet-scented air with the gay flowers and singing birds only made it sadder. They seemed a mockery.

\* Olbaldeh thinks this must be the Centralpahk sometimes alluded to in Mehrikan literature.

We have encamped for the night, and I can write no more. Countless flying insects gather about us with a hateful buzz, and bite us beyond endurance. They are a pest thrice accursed.

I tell Nofuhl his fine theory concerning the extinction of the Yahnkis is a good tale for those who have never been here.

No man without a leather skin could survive a second night.

*18th May*

Poor Ja-khaz is worse than sick.

He had an encounter last night with a strange animal, and his defeat was ignoble. The animal, a pretty thing, much like a kitten, was hovering near when Ja-khaz, with rare courage and agility, threw himself upon it.

And then what happened none of us can state with precision. We know we held our noses and fled. And Ja-khaz! No words can fit him. He carries with him an odor to devastate a province. We had to leave him ashore and send him fresh raiment.

This is, verily, a land of surprises.

Our hands and faces still smart from the biting insects, and the perfume of the odorous kitten promises to be ever with us.

Nofuhl is happy. We have discovered hundreds of metal blocks, the poorest of which he asserts would be the gem of a museum. They were found by Fattan-laiz-eh in the basement of a high building, all laid carefully away upon iron shelves. The flood of light they throw upon the manners and customs of this ludicrous people renders them of priceless value to historians.

I harbor a suspicion that it causes Nofuhl some pleasure to sit upon the cool deck of the *Zlotuhb* and watch Bhoz-ja-khaz walking to and fro upon the ruins of a distant wharf.

*19th May*

The air is cooler. Grip-til-lah thinks a storm is brewing.

Even Nofuhl is puzzled over the wooden image we brought aboard yesterday. It is well preserved, with the barbaric coloring still fresh upon it. They found it standing upright in a little shop.

How these idols were worshipped, and why they are found in little shops and never in the great temples is a mystery. It has a diadem of feathers on the head, and as we sat smoking upon the deck this evening I remarked to Nofuhl that it might be the

portrait of some Mehrikan noble. Whereupon he said they had no nobles.

"But the Mehrikans of gentle blood," I asked, "had they no titles?"

"Neither titles nor gentle blood," he answered. "And as they were all of much the same origin, and came to this country simply to thrive more fatly than at home, there was nothing except difference in wealth on which to establish a superior order. Being deep respecters of money this was a satisfying distinction. It soon resulted that those families who possessed riches for a generation or two became the substitute for an aristocracy. This upper class was given to sports and pastimes, spending their wealth freely, being prodigiously fond of display. Their intellectual development was feeble, and they wielded but little influence save in social matters. They followed closely the fashions of foreign aristocracies. Great attentions were paid to wandering nobles from other lands. Even distant relatives of titled people were greeted with the warmest enthusiasm."

*20th May*

An icy wind from the northeast with a violent rain. Yesterday we gasped with the hot air. Today we are shivering in winter clothing.

*21st May*

The same as yesterday. Most of us are ill. My teeth chatter and my body is both hot and cold. A storm more wicked never wailed about a ship. Lev-el-Hedyd calls it the shrieking voices of the seventy millions of Mehrikans who must have perished in similar weather.

*16th June*

It is many days since I have touched this journal. A hateful sickness has been upon me, destroying all energy and courage. A sort of fever, and yet my limbs were cold. I could not describe it if I would.

Nofuhl came into the cabin this evening with some of his metal plates and discoursed upon them. He has no respect for the intellects of the early Mehrikans. I thought for a moment I had caught him in a contradiction, but he was right as usual. It was thus:

*Nofuhl.*

They were great readers.

*Khan-li.*



You have told us they had no literature. Were they great readers of nothing?

*Nofuhl.*

Verily, thou hast said it! Vast sheets of paper were published daily in which all crimes were recorded in detail. The more revolting the deed, the more minute the description. Horrors were their chief delight. Scandals were drunk in with thirstful eyes. These chronicles of crime and filth were issued by hundreds of thousands. There was hardly a family in the land but had one.

*Khan-li.*

And did this take the place of literature?

*Nofuhl.*

Even so.

*20th June.*

Once more we are on the sea; two days from Nhu-Yok. Our decision was a sudden one. Nofuhl, in an evil moment, found among those accursed plates a map of the country, and thereupon was seized with an unreasoning desire to visit a town called "Washington." I wavered and at last consented, foolishly I believe, for the crew are loud for Persia. And this town is inland on a river. He says it was their finest city, the seat of government, the capital of the country. Grip-til-lah swears he can find it if the map is truthful.

Ja-khaz still eats by himself.

*2d July.*

We are on the river that leads to "Washington." Grip-til-lah says we shall sight it tomorrow. The river is a dirty color.

*3d July.*

We see ahead of us the ruins of a great dome, also a very high shaft. Probably they belong to the city we seek.

*4th July.*

A date we shall not forget!

Little did I realize this morning when we left the *Zlotuhb* in such a hilarious mood what dire events awaited us. I landed about noon, accompanied by Nofuhl, Lev-el-Hedyd, Bhoz-jakhaz, Ad-el-pate, Kuzundam the first mate, Tik'l-palyt the cook, Fattan-laiz-eh, and two sailors. Our march had scarce begun when a startling discovery caused great commotion in our minds. We had halted at Nofuhl's request, to decipher the inscription upon a stone, when Lev-el-Hedyd, who had started on, stopped

short with a sudden exclamation. We hastened to him, and there, in the soft earth, was the imprint of human feet!

I cannot describe our surprise. We decided to follow the footprints, and soon found they were leading us toward the great dome more directly than we could have gone ourselves. Our excitement was beyond words. Those of us who had weapons carried them in readiness. The path was little used, but clearly marked. It wound about among fallen fragments and crumbling statues, and took us along a wide avenue between buildings of vast size and solidity, far superior to any we had seen in Nuh-Yok. It seemed a city of monuments.

As we ascended the hill to the great temple and saw it through the trees rising high above us, we were much impressed by its vast size and beauty. Our eyes wandered in admiration over the massive columns, each hewn from a single block, still white and fresh as if newly quarried. The path took us under one of the lower arches of the building, and we emerged upon the other side. This front we found even more beautiful than the one facing the city. At the centre was a flight of steps of magnificent proportions, now falling asunder and overgrown in many places with grass and flowers.

These steps we ascended. As I climbed silently up, the others following, I saw two human feet, the soles toward us, resting upon the balustrade above. With a gesture I directed Nofuhl's attention to them, and the old man's eyes twinkled with delight. Was it a Mehrikan? I confess to a lively excitement at the prospect of meeting one. How many were they? and how would they treat us?

Looking down upon my little band to see that all were there, I boldly marched up the remaining steps and stood before him.

He was reclining upon a curious little four-legged seat, with his feet upon the balustrade, about on a level with his head. Clad in skins and rough cloth he looked much like a hunter, and he gazed quietly upon me, as though a Persian noble were a daily guest. Such a reception was not gratifying, especially as he remained in the same position, not even withdrawing his feet. He nodded his curious head down once and up again, deeming it apparently a sufficient salutation.

The maintenance of my dignity before my followers forbade my standing thus before a seated barbarian, and I made a gesture for him to rise. This he answered in an unseemly manner by

ejecting from his mouth a brownish fluid, projecting it over and beyond the balustrade in front of him. Then looking upon me as if about to laugh, and yet with a grave face, he uttered something in an unmusical voice which I failed to understand.

Upon this Nofuhl, who had caught the meaning of one or two words, stepped hastily forward and addressed him in his own language. But the barbarian understood with difficulty and they had much trouble in conversing, chiefly from reason of Nofuhl's pronunciation. He afterward told me that this man's language differed but little from that of the Mehrikans, as they wrote it eleven centuries ago.

When he finally arose in talking with Nofuhl I could better observe him. He was tall and bony, with an awkward neck, and appeared at first glance to be a man of forty years. We decided later he was under thirty. His yellow skin and want of hair made him seem much older than he was. I was also much puzzled by the expression of his face. It was one of deep sadness, yet his eyes were full of mirth, and a corner of his mouth was ever drawing up as if in mockery. For myself I liked not his manner. He appeared little impressed by so many strangers, and bore himself as though it were of small importance whether we understood him or not. But Nofuhl since informed me that he asked a multitude of questions concerning us.

What Nofuhl gathered was this:

This Mehrikan with his wife and one old man were all that remained of his race. Thirty-one had died this summer. In ancient times there were many millions of his countrymen. They were the greatest nation upon the earth. He could not read. He had two names, one was "Jon," the other he had forgotten. They lived in this temple because it was cool. When the temple was built, and for what purpose, he could not tell. He pointed to the west and said the country in that direction was covered with ruined cities.

When Nofuhl told him we were friends, and presented him at my direction with a hunting-knife of fine workmanship, he pushed out his right arm toward me and held it there. For an instant Nofuhl looked at the arm wonderingly, as did we all, then with sudden intelligence he seized the outstretched hand in his own, and moved it up and down. This was interesting, for Nofuhl tells me it was a form of greeting among the ancient Mehrikans.

While all this was going on we had moved into the great cir-



cular hall beneath the dome. This hall was of vast proportions, and there were still traces of its former splendor. Against the walls were marble statues entwined in ivy, looking down upon us with melancholy eyes. Here also we met a thin old man, whose hairless head and beardless face almost moved us to mirth.

At Nofuhl's request our host led the way into some of the smaller rooms to show us their manner of living, and it would be impossible to imagine a more pathetic mixture of glory and decay, of wealth and poverty, of civilization and barbarity. Old furniture, dishes of silver, bronze images, even paintings and ornaments of great value were scattered through the rooms, side by side with the most primitive implements. It was plain the ancient arts were long since forgotten.

When we returned to the circular hall our host disappeared for a few moments into a room which he had not shown us. He came back bringing a stone vase with a narrow neck, and was followed by a maiden who bore drinking-cups of copper and tin. These she deposited upon a fallen fragment of the dome which served as a table.

This girl was interesting. A dainty head, delicate features, yellow hair, blue eyes and a gentle sadness of mien that touched my heart. Had she been ugly what a different ending to this day!

We all saluted her, and the Mehrikan spoke a few words which we interpreted as a presentation. He filled the cups from the stone vase, and then saying something which Nofuhl failed to catch, he held his cup before his face with a peculiar movement and put it to his lips. As he did this Lev-el-Hedyd clutched my arm and exclaimed:

"The very gesture of the ghost!"

And then as if to himself, "And this is July fourth."

But he drank, as did we all, for our thirst was great and the odor of the golden liquid was most alluring. It tasted hotter than the fires of Jelbuz. It was also of great potency and gave a fine exhilaration to the senses. We became happier at once.

And here it was that Ja-khaz did a fatal thing. Being near the maid and much affected by her beauty, he addressed her as *Hur-al-nissa*,\* which, of course, she understood not. This were well had he gone no further, but he next put his arm about her waist with intent to kiss her. Much terrified, she tried to free herself. But Ja-khaz, holding her fair chin with his other hand,

\* The most angelic of women.

had brought his lips almost to hers when the old man raised his heavy staff and brought it down upon our comrade's head with cruel swiftness. This falling stick upon a solid skull resounded about the dome and echoed through the empty corridors.

Bhoz-ja-khaz blinked and staggered back.

Then, with fury in his face, he sprang savagely toward the aged man.

But here the younger Mehrikan interfered. Rapidly approaching them and shutting tight his bony hand, he shot it from him with startling velocity, so directing that it came in contact with the face of Ja-khaz who, to our amazement, sat roughly upon the marble pavement, the blood streaming from his nostrils. He was a pitiful sight.

Unaccustomed to such warfare we were seriously alarmed, and thought him killed perhaps. Ad-el-pate, a mighty wrestler, and of powerful build, rushed furiously upon the Mehrikan for whom I trembled. But his arm again went out before him, and Ad-el-pate likewise sat. A mournful spectacle, and every Persian felt his heart beat fast within him.

By this time Ja-khaz was on his feet again, purple with rage. With uplifted scimitar he sprang toward our host. The old man stepped between. Ja-khaz, with wanton cruelty, brought his steel upon the ancient head, and stretched him upon the floor. For an instant the younger one stood horror-stricken, then snatching from the floor the patriach's staff—a heavy stick with an iron end—he jumped forward, and, quicker than words can tell it, dealt a frightful blow upon the head of Ja-khaz which sent him headlong to the ground with a broken skull.

All this had happened in a moment, and wild confusion followed. My followers drew their arms and rushed upon the Mehrikan. The girl ran forward either from terror or to shield her spouse, I know not which, when a flying arrow from a sailor's cross-bow pierced her to the heart.

This gave the Mehrikan the energy of twenty men.

He knocked brave Kuzundam senseless with a blow that should have killed an ox. Such fury I had not conceived. He brought his flying staff like a thunderbolt from Heaven upon the Persian skulls, yet always edging toward the door to prevent his enemies surrounding him. Four of our number, in as many minutes joined Ja-khaz upon the floor. Kuzundam, Ad-el-pate, Fattan-laiz-eh,

and Ha-tak, a sailor, lay stretched upon the pavement, all dead or grievously wounded.

So suddenly had this taken place, that I hardly realized what had happened. I rushed forward to stay the combat, but he mistook the purpose, struck my scimitar with a force that sent it flying through the air, and had raised his staff to deal a second for myself, when brave Lev-el-Hedyd stepped in to save me, and thrust quickly at him. But alas! the Mehrikan warded off his stroke with one yet quicker, and brought his staff so swiftly against my comrade's head that it laid him with the others.

When Lev-el-Hedyd fell I saw the Mehrikan had many wounds, for my comrades had made a savage onslaught. He tottered as he moved back into the doorway, where he leaned against the wall for an instant, his eyes meeting ours with a look of defiance and contempt that I would willingly forget. Then the staff dropped from his hand; he staggered out to the great portico, and fell his length upon the pavement. Nofuhl hastened to him, but he was dead.

As he fell a wonderful thing took place—an impossible thing, as I look back upon it, but both Nofuhl and I saw it distinctly.

In front of the great steps and facing this doorway is a large sitting image of George-wash-yn-tun. As the Mehrikan staggered out upon the porch, his hands outstretched before him and with death at his heart, this statue slowly bowed its head as if in recognition of a gallant fight.

Perhaps it was the sorrowful acceptance of a bitter ending.

Again upon the sea.

7th July.

This time for Persia, bearing our wounded and the ashes of the dead; those of the natives are reposing beneath the Great Temple.

The skull of the last Mehrikan I shall present to the museum at Teheran.

### FULL CIRCLE

by VINCENT STARRETT

This is the very same bed;  
In it my grandfather died.  
Well I recall what he said:  
"This is the very same bed . . ."  
Just that, and next moment was dead.  
*Now I am here with my bride!*  
This is the very same bed:  
In it my grandfather died.



# THE REALM OF REDONDA

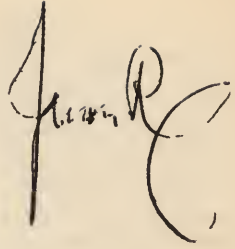
by AUGUST DERLETH

Redonda, says the Encyclopedia Britannica, is "an island in the British West Indies. It is a dependency of Antigua, Leeward Islands, and lies 25 mi. S. W. of it, in 25° 6' N. and 61° 35' W. It is a rocky mountain, rising abruptly from the sea to a height of 1,000 ft.; area  $\frac{1}{2}$  sq. mi. Some 7,000 tons of phosphate of alumina (discovered in 1865) are exported annually by the population of about 12."

But Redonda is more than that, with all due apologies to the learned gentlemen who put together the Encyclopedia Britannica. Redonda is a kingdom which, paradoxically, has a literary significance to all *aficionados* of the fantastic and strange. For, from the time he was fifteen to his death in 1947, Matthew Phipps Shiel was king of Redonda, and since his death, his literary executor, himself a poet and author, John Gawsworth, has reigned as King Juan I, the second monarch of the tiny isle.

The kingdom of Redonda began in 1880, when Shiel's father landed there with the Bishop of Antigua, and solemnly had his fifteen-year old son crowned King of Redonda before an audience of awed natives. From that time on, M. P. Shiel gravely accepted the title, and when his friendship with John Gawsworth deepened, he and Gawsworth went through an ancient blood ritual, which created Gawsworth Prince of the Blood. Gawsworth accordingly succeeded to the title at the death of Shiel early in 1947, taking title of Juan I, and creating thereafter a Court he describes as "purely an intellectual aristocracy"—chiefly of literary figures, known throughout the English-speaking world.

Until his death last December, Arthur Machen was the Arch-Duke of Redonda. Among the Grand Dukes are Carl Van Vechten and Victor Gollancz. Among the Dukes are Neil Bell, A. E. W. Mason, Eden Phillpotts, Ellery Queen, Arthur Ransome, Frank Swinnerton, and Dylan Thomas. Other literary figures have individual titles—Henry Miller, Duke of Thuana; Philip Lindsay, Duke of Guano; Lawrence Durrell, Duke of Cervantes Pequena; Oswald Blakeston, Duke of Sangro; Edgar Jepson, Duke of Wedrigo, and so on.



REALM OF REDONDA

Upon the Occasion of the Birthday of  
H.M. KING JUAN I,  
He is Graciously pleased,  
In Recognition of their Services to His Royal Predecessor,  
H.M. KING FELIPE I,  
to Welcome into the Intellectual Aristocracy of His Realm  
— with Succession to their Heirs Male —

TO  
THE ARCH-DUCHY OF REDONDA  
MACHEN, Arthur Llewelyn Jones,

TO  
GRAND-DUCHIES OF NERA ROCCA

GOCHER, Kate,	MORSE, A. Reynolds,
GOLLANCZ, Victor,	SHANKS, Edward Buxton,
MILLER, Annamarie V.,	VAN VECHTEN, Carl.

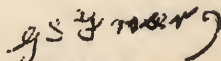
TO  
DUCHIES OF THE REALM

ARMSTRONG, Ethel Laura,	KING-FRETTS, Anne,	RICHARDS, Grant,
BELL, Neil,	MASON, A. E. W.,	ROBERTS, Walter,
CARTER, Frederick,	MEYERSTEIN, E. H. W.,	ROWLAND, John,
CHESSON, W. H.,	MYER, K. G.,	SWINNERTON, Frank
"CONNELL, John",	NAYDLER, Merton,	THOMAS, Dylan,
DERLETH, August,	OWEN, Walter,	TYTHERIDGE, Alan,
DORO, Edward,	PHILLPOTTS, Eden,	WALKER, James,
FERGUSON, Malcolm M.,	POLDEN, DAVID C.,	WALLER, John,
FLETCHER, Iain,	"QUEEN, Ellery",	WHEELER, John,
HENLE, James,	RANSOME, Arthur,	WIGGINS, G. H.

Further His Majesty is Graciously pleased  
to Confirm the following Appointments, Admitted under His Patents as Regent  
in the Reign of His Royal Predecessor, with Succession to their Heirs Male,

TO  
BLAKESTON, Oswald, The Duchy of SANGRO,  
DURRELL, Lawrence, The Duchy of CERVANTES PEQUENA,  
JEPSON, Edgar, The Duchy of WEDRIGO,  
JOHNSON, Buffie, The Duchy of NERA CASTILIA,  
LINDSAY, Philip, The Duchy of GUANO,  
MILLER, Henry, The Duchy of THUANA,  
RAMSEY, T. Weston, The Duchy of VALLADOLIDA,  
ROTA, Cyril Bertram, The Duchy of SANCHE.

Given Under His Majesty's Hand, His Court-in-Exile, Kensington  
The Twenty-ninth Day of June in the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-seven.



Chamberlain.

The late M. P. Shiel was widely-known for his novels and short stories of fantasy and mystery in his distinctive style—*The Lord of the Sea*, *The Yellow Danger*, *Dr. Krasinski's Secret*, *The Pale Ape and Other Pulses*, *Prince Zaleski*, *How the Old Woman Got Home*, *The Black Box*, *Cold Steel*, and many others. Shiel reigned as King Felipe I. John Gawsworth was born Terence Armstrong, and in 1939 was awarded the Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature. Now a poet of distinction, he is also editor of the *Literary Digest* of London.

At his recent wedding in London, Gawsworth was treated to a mild and whimsical fanfare in the British press under such heads as *Golders Green Poet Is Island "King"*, *Monarch of Redonda Takes Unto Himself a Queen*, *It Couldn't Matter Less to Redonda*, *Estelle's London Wedding Makes Her a "Queen"*, etc. "The 120 natives of an almost unknown island in the Caribbean Sea are going about their unhurried duties this week blissfully unaware that thousands of miles away their 'King' has just taken unto himself a wife. And in Wentworth-road, Golders Green, local householders are equally unaware that the literary looking gentleman living at No. 50 is the second monarch of sleepy Redonda—a tiny dot on the West Indies map."

With rare fidelity, however, Gawsworth and his "intellectual aristocracy" are keeping alive the legend of the Realm of Redonda in tribute to its first monarch, M. P. Shiel.



# "GOUGOU"

by P. SCHUYLER MILLER

The account by Captain Jabez Waters of Phillipsport, Maine, of the two strange anthropoid sea-monsters which appeared on Outer Shoal after the great marine disturbance of 1929, ("*The Thing on Outer Shoal*", *Astounding Science-Fiction*, September 1947; *The Other Side of the Moon*, edited by August Derleth, Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1949), has been questioned by many who have read it. When Captain Waters told me his story in the spring of 1941 neither he nor I was aware of the account left by the celebrated French explorer, Samuel Champlain, of a monster inhabiting these same regions and reported to him by the Indians near the close of his first voyage to Canada in the year 1603.

Champlain's account of "a terrible monster which the savages call *Gougou*" forms the greater part of the closing chapter of the little book of 80 pages entitled *Des Sauvages; ou, Voyage de Samuel Champlain, de Brovage, fait en la France Nouvelle, l'an mil six cens trois* published at Paris by Claude de Monstr'oeil early in the following year (1604). This account was dropped from the 1613 and 1632 editions of the *Voyages*. It is given below from the Prince Society translation of 1880.

The Bay de Chaleurs, where Champlain places the island of the monster, separates the Gaspé Peninsula from the northern shore of New Brunswick. However Prevert, whom he met in the Bay of Chaleurs, and who confirmed the reports of the monster, had been exploring the Bay of Fundy in search of copper and other minerals, and may actually have encountered the creature off the coast of Maine.

It is of interest that Champlain's Indian informants report that the *Gougou* had the characteristic marsupial pouch. This tends to confirm the remote antiquity of the mammalian ancestor which first adapted itself to life in the sea. The female seen by Captain Waters and his companions did not emerge from the sea far enough for the presence or absence of this pouch to be confirmed, but the descriptions are otherwise strikingly parallel, and go a long way to indicate that the *Gougou* reported by Champlain nearly 350 years ago still inhabits the North Atlantic and may from time to time emerge upon its lonelier shores.

Champlain's account follows:

"There is, moreover, a strange matter, worthy of being related, which several savages have assured me was true; namely, near the Bay of Chaleurs, towards the south, there is an island where a terrible monster resides, which the savages call *Gougou*, and which they told me had the form of a woman, though very frightful, and of such a size that they told me the tops of the masts of our vessel would not reach to his middle, so great do they picture him; and they say that he has often devoured and still continues to devour many savages; these he puts, when he can catch them, into a great pocket, and afterwards eats them; and those who had escaped the jaws of this wretched creature said that its pocket was so great that it could have put our vessel into it. This monster makes horrible noises in this island, which the savages call the *Gougou*; and when they speak of him, it is with the greatest possible fear, and several have assured me that they have seen him. Even the above-mentioned Prevert from St. Malo told me that, while going in search of mines, as mentioned in the previous chapter, he passed so near the dwelling-place of this frightful creature, that he and all those on board his vessel heard strange hissings from the noise it made, and that the savages with him told him it was the same creature, and that they were so afraid that they hid themselves wherever they could, for fear it would come and carry them off. What makes me believe what they say is the fact that all the savages in general fear it, and tell such strange things about it that, if I were to record all they say, it would be regarded as a myth; but I hold that this is the dwelling-place of some devil that torments them in the above-mentioned manner. This is what I have learned about this *Gougou*." (*Voyages of Sieur de Champlain*, I: 289-290, The Prince Society, Boston. 1880.)

# CHARACTERIZATION IN IMAGINATIVE LITERATURE

by JACK C. MISKE

There has been considerable discussion for years, and particularly of late in this publication, about the need for characterization in imaginative literature. Recent comment has tended to concentrate on an alleged inadequacy of characterization in that branch of imaginative fiction that is usually termed science-fiction. For that reason, although I propose to deal basically with characterization as it pertains to fantasy in general, I feel obliged also to discuss it separately in connection with each of the three commonly accepted divisions of fantasy—namely, supernatural fiction, science-fiction, and “pure fantasy.” For the purposes of this paper I am ignoring adventure-type tales on the basis that adventure can be either good or bad, but is always adventure, whatever the background of a tale, be it modern or ancient, real or imaginary.

Actually, I can conceive of no reasonable basis for isolating any one of the three branches of the central genre from either or both of the others. The criticism directed at the lack in science-fiction of adequate characterization seems to this observer to have originated with individuals either chiefly interested in supernatural writing or, more certainly, from individuals who have not made the same criticism of supernatural material, although no valid reason for such a distinction seems to exist.

August Derleth is perhaps most representative of the critics of science-fiction who have been clamoring for great characterization in the form. Mr. Derleth has, however, important allies, such as John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Science-Fiction*. Writing in *Of Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing*, Mr. Campbell said “For, above all else, a story—science-fiction or otherwise—is a story of human beings.” This view closely parallels that of Mr. Derleth, as will be clear shortly. The validity of it is another matter. The concept of the place of characterization in imaginative literature represented by fantasy author, editor, and publisher Derleth not only does not seem justifiable to me, but does not, I suspect, demonstrate perfect consistency.

In the introduction to his first science-fiction anthology, *Strange Ports of Call*, Mr. Derleth expressed his feelings that “. . . in most science-fiction stories human beings are somewhat less than



human beings: they are effigies of men and women, and there is no human warmth in them." A discerning critic must necessarily be in general concordance with that statement; although it should have included all fantasy in its scope, certainly it is essentially true. But what Mr. Derleth went on to say is more debatable: "Yet the plain and indisputable fact is that the great stories, whether in the fields of romance or fantasy, concern people to whom something happens, and not just people who are conveniently present to attend the birth of some fanciful scientific concept." This criticism I differ with for more than one reason.

First, the mention of "the birth of some fanciful scientific concept" seems to limit the application of the idea to science-fiction, though I infer from the first part of the sentence that Mr. Derleth spoke of fiction in general. Second, I do not think Mr. Derleth or anyone else could prove "plainly and indisputably" that people are the most important concern of all great stories. Last, I am certain that people do not hold that place in fantasy in general or in science-fiction in particular.

Mr. Derleth went on to say that, "It is because of this curious lack (of "people to whom something happens") that there are so few really memorable stories in the genre of science-fiction." Interpreted literally, Mr. Derleth may be right, but my position is that science-fiction's lack of characterization is an inherent quality of the form. Mr. Derleth, however, very certainly implied that science-fiction could and should include as much characterization as any other writing. The important fact involved is that his words were a criticism of the form, not an analysis of it. Since Mr. Derleth has never written similarly in the introduction to his numerous anthologies of weird fiction, nor so criticized weird fiction at any time, to my knowledge, and since he affirmed the need for characterization in all fiction, one can only assume he feels that weird fiction *is* replete with fine characterization. \*1 That attitude is wholly indefensible to me, for certainly weird stories in general manifest no more effective characterization than science-fiction in general, and for the same reason: lack of characterization is an inherent quality of the form. That lack is in fact an inherent quality of all imaginative literature. It may limit the literary value or the appeal of the form, but the limitation seems, in that event, to be unavoidable; for characterization simply is not a primary objective or concern of authors of fantasy, as the prolific Mr. Derleth certainly must realize.

Historically, formal supernatural literature dates pretty much from the production of the eighteenth century Gothic novels, modeled largely after Horace Walpole's tale of Strawberry Hill, *The Castle of Otranto*. The original appeal of those novels was not based to any extent whatsoever on good characterization, nor is that of contemporary weird writing. The motivations that create readers of the weird derive chiefly from pleasure at the play of imagination, at the evocation of mood and horror, and at the capacity of any writer to produce strange, original, and striking writing based on fantasy. In the instance of the old Gothic novel, such then original but now trite devices as clanking chains, walking skeletons, gigantic floating helmets, labyrinthine passageways, deserted castles, and all the other characteristic features of the type constituted the principal attractions. The romantic story, seldom more than perfunctory, was only a secondary lure, the chief purpose of which was merely to provide a vehicle for the parade of horrible effects previously mentioned. Despite the modern distaste for such devices as typified Gothic novels, the basic appeal of weird writing still is the presence of an element of strangeness, of something alien to experience and fact. How and why such factors are sources of pleasure is a subject in itself, but that they are such sources seems incontrovertible.

In the field of science-fiction, a similar motivation applied to its readers. Early science-fiction generally took the form either of satire or of utopian writing. Obviously the appeal was primarily intellectual, not emotional or personal; the emphasis was and is on ideas, not on persons. Certainly the ideas or implications were and are virtually always related to humanity and have meaning only through that relationship; but this situation is not at all the same as their having meaning in terms of a specific character or group of characters would be. What happens is that characters in science-fiction are usually types or caricatures or symbols of the race, not individuals. The more an author can emphasize individuals without doing so at the expense of his primary concern, the idea, the better the story will be; but that sort of development is limited by its secondary nature.

In both fields, despite the evolution represented by such modern works as Lovecraft's stories based on his Cthulhu Mythos or Van Vogt's tales formed, however crudely, on the bases of philosophical concepts, much the same situations will maintain and to a large degree must always maintain. A good weird tale must al-

ways rely primarily on imagination and the evocation through strangeness of horror. Good science-fiction must always concern itself with ideas, particularly though not necessarily those with prophetic, sociological, and philosophical implications.

The third division of imaginative literature, pure fantasy, is obviously very little concerned with characterization. In the pure form, exemplified by many of Dunsany's short stories and a few of H. P. Lovecraft's, it represents nothing else to the extent that it does play of imagination and pleasure in the effective use of words. Vagueness and lack of detail are integral parts of the charm the form holds for its readers. Pure fantasy chronicles worlds entirely of dream, and realistic characterization is compatible with it,

Of these three subdivisions of imaginative writing, science-fiction very probably possesses the greatest potentialities for character development, but there, too, characterization must be subordinated, or the imaginative writing will cease to exist. As an example of the inherent limitations to the development of characterization in science-fiction, consider Stanley Weinbaum's *The New Adam*, a novel of a mutant. Dealing as it does with one person and his life in *this* society, the story offered an opportunity for characterization unusual to science-fiction; in fact, the chief concern of the book is with characterization. But on the last page of his previously mentioned introduction to *Strange Ports of Call*, Mr. Derleth adequately enough described good characters as "multi-dimensional, intensely real people." Can a mutant be an "intensely real" person? Conversely can a human character be "intensely real" when he has been wrenched from the real human environment to an imaginary one? \*2 And if both the character and the environment are real, where is the element of fantasy, science-fiction or otherwise? \*3 Mr. Derleth very properly noted on page 93 of *The Arkham Sampler* for Winter, 1949 that "It (science-fiction) stands by itself, perhaps, but it does not stand apart from fantasy . . ." I will leave to him or someone else the task of reconciling "fantasy" and the "intensely real." Here, as with his failure to criticize all fantasy rather than just science-fiction for its lack of characterization, Mr. Derleth's criticism seems to me to have been inconsistent.

Characterization is based on reality and on human qualities, plus insight, but the effective integration of those factors with non-human protagonists or imaginary environments seems impos-



sible to me. The whole question resolves substantially to one of ecology, I should say. Science-fiction which deals primarily with human beings in their real society is not science-fiction to just the extent that it does so. No great literary character whom I can remember is not first and foremost a human being. No character is great unless he is real, and reality is very obviously related to fantastic literature of all kinds only indirectly, as I noted previously, by the relation of any individual fantasy to real life. \*4 This circumstance is a different thing entirely from preoccupation with reality itself. The essential fact is this: reality, so vital to the creation of great characters, is inevitably inimical to the creation of great imaginative literature. \*5 Consequently, great characterization is almost always impossible in imaginative writing; at best, it is always a subordinate objective to effect or mood in supernatural writing and to the idea or meaning in science-fiction.

Science-fiction stories which are usually acknowledged to be parts of the great literature of the world are not very numerous, but such works as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* probably are among them and will serve as examples. As one man who makes his living by studying literature, I am unable to find any "multi-dimensional, intensely real" characters in these volumes. Gulliver is not a character at all: he is a symbol and a device. What is important about Swift's work is the incisive commentary on humanity that is embodied in the situations Gulliver encountered. Wells' Time Traveler in only a title, and Huxley's characters are caricatures. As I commented earlier, the ideas are the core of science-fiction, and characterization runs a poor second as an objective.

Where weird fiction is concerned, I encounter a similar paucity of characterization in all the stories of H. P. Lovecraft, Arthur Machen, Lord Dunsany, or of anyone else, including Mr. Derleth. Instead of offering what I feel would be a needless list of examples and analyses of them, I defer to H. P. Lovecraft, as he is quoted on pages 80 and 81 of *H. P. L.: A Memoir*, a fine little volume by Mr. Derleth:

Spectral fiction should be realistic and atmospheric—confining its departure from nature to the one supernatural channel chosen, and remembering that scene, mood, and phenomena are more important in conveying what is to be conveyed than are characters and plot. The 'punch' of a truly weird tale is simply some violation

or transcending of fixed cosmic law—an imaginative escape from palling reality—since *phenomena* rather than *persons* are the logical ‘heroes’.

Even the dictum that great characters are indispensable accompaniments of all great literature outside the genre of the fantastic is not true. There is no point to an enumeration of examples, but one work is particularly interesting. Milton’s great epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, is chiefly criticized for the overwhelmingly successful characterization of Satan in the first two books, on the grounds that the scope of the characterization is not only outside the purpose of the work, but detrimental to the successful communication of that purpose. Note the similarity of this circumstance to the principle I have enunciated as fundamental to fantasy.

It is certainly true, however, from Tom Jones to Captain Ahab, that characterization has been a fundamental part of most great writing. But the point of this essay is that, nevertheless, fantasy of all kinds lies outside the generalization. The legitimate objectives of imaginative literature simply do not include characterization as a major goal. Story and plot are more central to the problems of writers of weird and scientific fiction. The best characterization possible is always desirable, and hackneyed stock characters are always deplorable; but in any consideration of the importance of characterization relative to the other components of imaginative literature, characterization emerges in a secondary position.

*Editorial Notes:* \*1: The assumption is unwarranted. Mr. Miske here sets up a straw dummy and proceeds to knock it down.

\*2: Why not?

\*3: A *non sequitur*.

\*4: Fantasy is an integral part of real life, Mr. Miske notwithstanding.

\*5: Mr. Miske is confusing “realism” with “reality”. His conclusion does not follow.

# BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

## JAMESIAN SPECTRES

THE GHOSTLY TALES OF HENRY JAMES, Edited by Leon Edel. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 766 pp., \$5.00.

Perhaps the best-known and most widely reprinted American macabre tale after Poe is Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*; hardly an enthusiast exists who does not know this fine long short story. But, curiously enough, other supernatural fiction by James is practically unknown, and, incredible as it may seem, Mr. Edel's collection is the first to be published of the supernatural stories of Henry James.

As the James followers know, his "ghosts" are not conventional. Perhaps it is because *The Turn of the Screw* best combines the conventional with the forceful psychological horror which James could create so well that it is the best-known of his tales. These stories are singularly effective. It is undeniable that there are times when the contemporary reader may find them difficult going because of a leisureliness of manner and style which seems to prolong given stories unnecessarily, but any story by Henry James will repay reading, and the stories in this collection are no exception. It is not an overstatement to describe these tales as "some of the most terrifying ever written."

Conceived and put down between the ages of 25 and 64, the stories in the collection, almost all of novella length, include *The Romance of Certain Old Clothes*, *DeGrey: A Romance*, *The Last of the Valerii*, *The Ghostly Rental*, *Sir Edmund Orme*, *Nona Vincent*, *The Private Life*, *Sir Dominick Ferrand*, *Owen Wingrave*, *The Altar of the Dead*, *The Friends of the Friends*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Real Right Thing*, *The Great Good Place*, *Maud-Evelyn*, *The Third Person*, *The Beast in the Jungle*, and *The Jolly Corner*. In addition, there is Mr. Edel's introductory essay, *Henry James's Ghosts*.

The discerning reader can only agree with Mr. Edel's statement that James "took the worn ghost story and left it immeasurably enriched, giving to it the depth of his psychological observation and the insight of his analysis; drawing his reader into his quasi-supernatural world and weaving his spell with an art at once economical yet lavish so that the reading of his tales becomes not only an entertainment, the exercising of an enchanted fireside spell, but a deep and rewarding experience. In reading the



ghostly tales of this great American novelist we walk in the broad daylight of our own lives with our own ghosts."

The collector of supernatural fiction and lore will be grateful to editor and publisher for making available this first comprehensive collection of some of the finest macabre tales in the language.

—AUGUST DERLETH

## TWO BIBLIOGRAPHIES

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF SIR HENRY RIDER HAGGARD, 1856-1925, by J. E. Scott. Elkin Mathews, Herts. 258 pp., 42/ (\$8.50).

THE WORKS OF M. P. SHIEL, by A. Reynolds Morse. Fantasy Publishing Company, inc., and A. Reynolds Morse. Los Angeles, California. Illustrated. 170 pp., \$6.00.

Most fantasy readers will be pleased to learn that bibliographical studies have recently appeared on such widely-known authors as H. Rider Haggard and M. P. Shiel, both of whom, although prolific in other fields, are now remembered chiefly for their fantasy.

Mr. Scott's book is the earlier and the better. It consists, basically, of collections of the major British and first American editions of all Haggard's work, both fiction and non-fiction, to which are added lists of Haggard articles and ephemera, critical pieces by Haggard, and much else. Most interesting is a life of Allan Quatermain, whose deeds, like those of Sherlock Holmes, must be ingeniously interpreted before they can fit any normal biological pattern.

The collations, as far as I have been able to check, are accurate, with only a few minor errors. Scott's method is very clear, and his short paragraphs about the history of each book are both interesting and informative. Among other things of interest we learn that Kipling had a much greater hand in Haggard's work than had been generally known—having collaborated in *The Ghost Kings* and *Allan and the Ice Gods*; and that Haggard was seriously accused of plagiarism from Moore's *Epicurean*, until ably defended by Andrew Lang. To anyone who has read both *She* and Moore's work, the charges seem ridiculous, but they were long seriously discussed.

And there are many bibliographical asides for the avid Haggard collector: the almost mythical 12-copy edition of *The Missionary and the Witchdoctor* was published by the Paget Literary Agency for copyright purposes in this country, while the story has also

been printed as *Little Flower* in *Smith and the Pharaohs*; the much-sought "first edition" of *The Lady of the Heavens*, with the Authors and Newspapers Association imprint, exists in but a single copy deposited by copyright purposes in the Library of Congress. *The Spring of a Lion*, almost as rare as *The Missionary and the Witchdoctor*, is an American pirating of *Hunter Quatermain's Story*, while *A Tale of Three Lions* corresponds to *Allan the Hunter*.

Mr. Scott's study is very good, on the whole, but I have two points to criticize—first editions and American printings. I must object most emphatically to Mr. Scott's automatic identification of first editions with first British printings, especially when, according to his own information, which I have partly checked, many American editions appeared considerably before the British printings. The following appeared first in America: *She*, *Mr. Meeson's Will*, *Maiwa's Revenge*, *Heart of the World*, *The Wizard*, *Swallow*, *Stella Fregelius*, *She and Allan*, *Queen of the Dawn*. The final results of Mr. Scott's excellent documentation on *She*, for example, shows that the Harper edition not only appeared before the British edition but, in common with the magazine version, preserves an older plot variation which does not appear in other editions.

Mr. Scott has also delimited himself too severely on editions to be collated. His hesitation to list all American imprints is understandable, since American editions are almost infinite, and Haggard was not fortunate enough to have a John Gawsworth to keep records, as was Shiel. But Mr. Scott might have listed a few more American items than he does list, particularly the McKinley, Stone & Mackenzie set, and the omnibus volumes, since these are the editions which the American collector is most apt to meet.

The general weakness in American aspects of Haggard is also evident in the omission of the various Haggard imitations and continuations that appeared in this country. We might name Marshall's insipid *King of Kor*, which continues *She* spiritualistically, De Morgan's *He*, which offers parallel adventures to *She* in search of Kallikrates, who, like *She*, is immortal, on Easter Island, and De Morgan's *It*, a hunt for the missing link. There are others.

Nevertheless, the Haggard bibliography is a very competent

and professional job, and despite its exorbitant price, I would recommend it to Haggard enthusiasts.

After the scholarly atmosphere of the Scott bibliography, Mr. Morse's *The Works of M. P. Shiel* comes as very much of a contrast. Let me make a few quotations to set the tone of the book: "I attend time's slow integration of the superlative I feel he deserves with all the impatience of prophecy . ." (page xvii); ". . . held us in his spell so completely that the word of his passing was like the severing of a link with G-O-D. We knew an unusual F-O-R-C-E *had* existed, and that now some mysterious bond with the Universe was gone. The realization is slowly spreading that M. P. Shiel was more than a novelist, more than a philosopher—indeed, more than a man . . ." (shades of Rudolf Otto!) (page 19); "There is no more fruitful field for topical and linguistic investigation than the works of M. P. Shiel." (page 57). Lest I be accused of having pried the last gem from its setting, I might remark that it follows its only proof, a completely unnecessary derivation on the authority of "a Polish scholar" of Shiel's term of affection, "pigseye", from Polish. Mr. Morse should have looked into the Oxford English Dictionary.

*The Works of M. P. Shiel* is a very ambitious work. After an introduction by Morse appears Shiel's essay, *About Myself*, then biographical notes by Morse, a listing of Shiel's personal library, collation of all editions of all Shiel's works, and then miscellaneous features, including much ephemera, the disposition of Shiel's manuscripts, information about the novels of Louis Tracy and "Gordon Holmes", in both of which Shiel occasionally took a part, and finally Edward Shank's funeral address. The amount of material collated is impressive, and it seems obvious that Gawsworth and Morse have done a good job of assembling Shiel editions and reprints. I know of but one unimportant omission, T. Everett Harre's *Beware After Dark*, which contains *Huquenin's Wife*.

The accuracy of the collations is high. There are occasional errors, but none is very important. But the presentation is not very clear. Even with the collated book before one, it is sometimes difficult to follow Morse's presentation, and, when compared with the clarity of Scott's method, the Shiel collations seem even muddier. Morse's greatest weakness, perhaps, is a lack of consistency, which comes out in many ways. He describes the same phenomenon in several different ways, as, for



example, the Vanguard system of boxes. And he very often alters his bibliographic procedure with no good reason. Sometimes he offers literal wording in quotes, sometimes without; sometimes he summarizes, either with or without quotes, seemingly as the fancy seizes him. We can observe the same lack of consistency in the occasional inclusion of dust-wrapper material. The various departments, finally, are not well integrated.

In addition to the collations, Morse occasionally offers short resumes of the books themselves. This is an excellent idea; one could wish Mr. Scott had done likewise. Shiel is admittedly a difficult author to summarize, since so much of his appeal lies in style and technique, and Morse usually does well, although he is occasionally misleading, as in his characterization of the hot, rich Haroun al Rashid atmosphere and oriental plot intricacy of *How the Old Woman Got Home* as Shiel's "political system", or the dubbing of the tortured Adam Jefferson of *The Purple Cloud* as "tart and austere", which could hardly be farther from the mark.

Nor is Mr. Morse as helpful as Mr. Scott in giving sources for his statements. We wonder, for example, how he knows that the first issue of *The Lost Viol* is the one without the leaves on the spine. Is it his intuition, Mr. Gawsworth's research, or Shiel's admittedly erratic memory? Much might also have been made of "points" within the texts of the various states and editions.

But the lists of ephemeral matter and anthology lists are very impressive; one must marvel at Mr. Gawsworth's energy and resourcefulness in compiling them. Should Shiel ever be "discovered", Gawsworth's work will prove of inestimable value.

*The Works of M. P. Shiel*, because of its collations, will be indispensable to the Shiel collector, but I feel that it might have been vastly improved if Mr. Morse had had less enthusiasm and more technique.

—EVERETT BLEILER

## THE DEVIL AND MISS BARKER

PEACE, MY DAUGHTERS, by Shirley Barker. Crown Publishers, New York. 248 pp., \$3.00.

The Devil, the witch, and the whole problem of evil seem to have an undying fascination for people of New England heritage. Their consciences, too, seem to bother them, every so often, about

the Salem witch-trials. They justify them, condemn them, or just explain them away, but they are often on their minds.

Seldom, however, have they been handled in novel form as well as in Shirley Barker's *Peace, My Daughters*. The writer, herself a descendant of that pious, nail-hard, courageous and often mean-minded race who settled New England, has attempted to answer the old questions—just what *did* take place in Salem back in 1692? Was the Devil really abroad, or was it mass-hysteria? Who really were the culprits—the “afflicted children” or the good wives they accused? And what part *did* the self-righteous judges play in the trials?

Miss Barker claims that while much of the witch-scare can be laid to the vicious craving for excitement of adolescent girls and weak-minded women bored half-crazy by the long Puritan winter evenings, not all that happened can be so easily explained. There was, she holds, something more. So she gives to Evil the shape of a man, a shoemaker, decorous, plain (even if, from his description, he must have looked like Gregory Peck) who walks to and fro upon the lanes of Salem, intent on destroying as many of Adam's race as he can. Few suspect him to be more than man. To Remember Winster he seems both man and friend, and she falls passionately in love with the one, as she abhors the other aspect of John Horne. All through his strange sojourn among the citizens of Salem, she never quite makes up her mind as to what he is—although when John Horne leaves, it is noticeable that peace, more or less, descends upon the sons and daughters of the town.

This is a first novel of distinction, with a fine, restrained mood, a vividly presented atmosphere of horror and fear, and a lovely, lyric style, which is that of a writer who is first of all a poet. (Her *The Dark Hills Under* was one of the Yale Series of Younger Poets.) So deft is her evocation of the period, and so clean-cut the characterizations of both the historical and fictional people concerned, that the book reads like a genuine experience of the writer's among the events she describes. (Does Miss Barker by any chance own some sort of astral broomstick that lets her hop back and forth in time?) If some readers will not see eye to eye with all her conclusions in the realm of metaphysics, they will admit that hers are ingenious and sincerely offered. She has seemed to endeavor earnestly to reach a just balance between jeering disbelief and superstitious credulity. The one thing this

reviewer found difficult to swallow was the ease with which her heroine contemplated marriage with a man she is pretty sure is Old Horny himself. Tall, dark and handsome as the fellow was, surely a sensible girl like Remember would have run from him like—well, like the Devil!

—LEAH BODINE DRAKE

### CRISTINA

THE ROOM BEYOND, by Robert Spencer Carr. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York. 427 pp., \$3.00.

It will be interesting to watch this novel become, in a relatively short time, one of the outstanding classics of fantasy. Like *To Walk the Night*, with which it has a certain kinship, it has had inadequate advertising, tepid reviews, yet, as counterbalance to the lack of ballyhoo, an enthusiastic and growing word-of-mouth acclaim from the imaginative, who ultimately determine the destinies of all literary effort.

Not since Claude Houghton's *I Am Jonathan Scrivener* have we seen such suspense in the portrayal of character. But if one recalls, the conjectural, enigmatic Scrivener was a kind of trick, never quite achieving conviction or plasticity, while Cristina, the amazing woman around whom *The Room Beyond* was apparently built, springs instantly to life and remains, despite her provocative nature, the most vivid feminine creation in contemporary fantasy. Indeed, Cristina may well outshine most of her predecessors in enchantment—she seems more vital and human than Rima of *Green Mansions*, more elusive and lovable than Haggard's *She*, more profound and warmly alive than the extraordinary female of *To Walk the Night*, more tender than R. E. Spencer's *Felicità*. Like Homer's immortal Helen and the divine Beatrice of Dante, Cristina is the latest effort to conjure up the dream of Everyman's woman.

Dream women in fiction are, for the most part, pretty fragile, exotic, even implausible affairs. Not Cristina. Despite her complete unselfishness (a trait uncommon to the sex according to some critics), Cristina should persuade everyone of her quintessential humanity. Of course, the universality and depth of Cristina's appeal, especially to masculine readers, is apt to provoke considerable discussion from her more psychologically-minded admirers. This latter group may be reminded of that archtypal figure, the *anima*, which plays such a complex role in the



analytical psychology of Jung. Other readers, familiar with Somerset Maugham's *The Summing-Up*, will be likely to recall his mildly cynical dictum that no large portion of the public would ever be able to work up much interest in a novel whose chief character is a saint. Whether Cristina is to be viewed as a saint, an *anima*-figure, a delightful witch, or a very lovely young woman is a matter best left to the individual. One thing is certain: her charm, once encountered, defies analysis and amnesia.

All this, however, gives no hint of the swiftly-paced, absorbing story Mr. Carr has to tell. Like all other artfully sustained writing of the suspense variety, any synopsis, however allusive, is bound to detract from the reader's pleasure. It could be said that in a series of flashbacks (technically a *tour de force* of literary ingenuity) we are given the life-long quest of Dr. Bryce for his beloved. Like the heroes of the Grail quest, Danny Bryce revolts from the second best and, unlike others who encountered Cristina, he persists in a search that not only transforms his life, but brings him in the end a conviction that will strike many as thoroughly inspired.

Thoughtful readers will be impressed by Mr. Carr's deft handling of many perplexing religious issues, which are never permitted to dull the story's edge. Somehow he has managed to illuminate some of the profoundest mystical doctrines of Christianity and the East. Indeed, few novels of this century, apart from L. H. Myers' *The Root and the Flower* and *The Pool of Vishnu*, contain, if only by implication, so many startling insights into the problematics of life and death. Some may feel that Mr. Carr should have employed even more discursive material of a philosophic nature. Regardless of such conclusions as readers may reach, the testimony is likely to be unanimous that Mr. Carr's achievement is solid, memorable, provocative. No reader of *The Room Beyond* is ever again likely to see the riddle of immortality in the same light.

Like all top-flight creations, Mr. Carr's book lends itself to a wealth of interpretations; some will be moved by the energy, pace, and imaginative charm of the story; others will be stirred by the unusual treatment of man's purpose and destiny. But above all, Cristina remains as fresh and radiant as she has been since the dawn of time—familiar, elusive, enigmatic, unattainable!

—JOSEPH L. McNAMARA

## AN ARKHAM QUARTET

THE FOURTH BOOK OF JORKENS, by Lord Dunsany. Arkham House, 194 pp., \$3.00.

GENIUS LOCI AND OTHER TALES, by Clark Ashton Smith. Arkham House, 228 pp., \$3.00.

ROADS, by Seabury Quinn. With Illustrations by Virgil Finlay. Arkham House, 110 pp., \$2.00.

NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD, by August Derleth. Arkham House, 221 pp., \$3.00.

Of the four authors represented in these new books from Arkham House, Lord Dunsany is, of course, the most widely recognized master. The first "hump" which any writer of stories of the supernatural must get over is the problem of securing "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." This Dunsany achieves in various tales in various ways, but his generally employed device, which runs all through the collection, is to make his narratives "tall tales" in the well-bewhiskied mouth of Mr. Joseph Jorkens. Dunsany does not in this instance, as in some of his work, create his own mythology—he has left that for his American disciple (after a fashion), the author of *Genius Loci*—but he has offered a rich variety of supernatural stories—33 in all. Of those which fall into the science-fiction classification I am no judge, being "allergic" to this type among tales of fantasy; a trip to the moon upon the wings of the imagination seems to me a precious refreshment to the spirit of man, but I can perceive no reason why a ride on a rocket-ship should be more exciting than a dog-cart. But there are other stories which find me quite at home and none more so than those set in the writer's own Ireland. Perhaps humor is the one good quality generally found lacking in supernatural tales; here, and all the more welcome, therefore, is humor of the richest kind. The man out hunting the siver-verri finds in the lion's roaring "not so very far off . . . almost a homely sound." Dr. Caber turns down an illegal job as quite against his principles: "So they raised their price, and Caber was still against it, but said he would do it merely to oblige them." And Tifferly doesn't in the least object to signing the Devil's bond in the dark where he can't see to read it: "You see, there's nothing worse than the bond that the Devil said he was signing; so that any alteration would be to the good."

In general there are two kinds of supernatural stories: those in which the supernatural element intrudes into our homely and

comfortable world, and those in which the author lifts himself above human experience altogether and creates an independent world of his own. Which type is to be preferred depends no doubt upon the individual reader, but there can be no doubt that Clark Ashton Smith works in the second field. If you have an appetite for controversy, you can get up a real battle at this point—one school may shout that the other is pedestrian, unimaginative, and lacking the real supernatural flair, while the other can easily retort that the kind of imagination possessed by their opponents is unhealthy, childish, diseased, a grand futility, and a prime example of wasted ingenuity altogether. It's all a little like the difference between being interested in God-in-His-Heaven and being interested in God as He manifests Himself in nature, in human life, and in the field of history. Upon first consideration, an absorption in God-in-His-Heaven would certainly seem the more disinterested and much the more lofty. Yet, strictly speaking, religion has nothing to do with God-in-His-Heaven. God-in-His-Heaven belongs to philosophy, to theology. But religion is a way of life, "the life of God in the soul of man." Of religion, consequently, many an accomplished philosopher or theologian has been nearly innocent. However all this may be, most of us, I fancy, feel that we can afford to be more catholic—and more heretical, too—in aesthetics than in matters of faith, which we have to live by. Whichever type of supernatural story we "plump" for at last, we had better allow some place in our enjoyment for the considerable art of Mr. Clark Ashton Smith, who, excepting Mr. Cabell (and Mr. Cabell is, after all, not quite this kind of writer) must be, now that Lovecraft is dead, at the very least the premiere American master in his particular genre.

Seabury Quinn's *Roads* is interesting not only, or perhaps even mainly, for its own sake, but also for that which it seems to presage. It is the first Arkham House illustrated Christmas book—very well illustrated, too—and one hopes that it has come to inaugurate a long line. The author's more than 500 short stories have made his name so well known that it is hard to realize that this is his first book. This time he tells how Santa Claus got that way, and it is only fair to say that he has imposed a considerable handicap upon himself by choosing to tell a story which quite fails to harmonize with any previously existent legend. Some readers, too, will find it peculiar ecclesiastical background



which surrounds the Bishop of Myra. Even granting Mr. Quinn his own prepossessions, I should hesitate to pronounce *Roads* a perfectly finished work of art, yet it is a work of art which has a good deal of charm. There has been all too little of this kind of thing in our American Christmases since all our novelists turned clinicians and all our magazines "reviews".

Mr. Derleth is apparently an author whom not even becoming a publisher can corrupt; he does not believe that a book is necessarily good even when he has both written and published it! In his introduction he speaks with extreme contempt of this, his third collection of "weirds": *Not Long for This World*. There are 32 tales here, and they cover a twenty-year stretch, from 1928 (when their author was 19) to 1948. (There are even a group of his early stories about the Borgias: *Chronicles of the City-States*.) But Mr. Derleth has been guilty of very harsh self-criticism. It is, to be sure, perfectly plain that he, as Bernard Shaw once said of himself, is a crow who has followed many plows, and that many of his tales have proceeded from no deep, irresistible aesthetic impulse, but rather from a necessity to meet the needs of a particular market or from the desire to see whether or not he could bring it off. Yet a lively interest in technique and in healthy experimentation is surely no disgrace to a young writer; and the most interesting thing about this collection is that in a rather high percentage of cases Mr. Derleth does bring it off. He seems equally at home with a simple, austere little ghost story in the Wilkins-Freeman tradition, like *Mrs. Bentley's Daughter*, with a tale of ghostly vengeance like *Mr. Berbeck Had a Dream*, with an M. R. Jamesian yarn, *The God-Box*, or with a piece of playful diabolism like *Baynter's Imp*. Not many writers could match this collection for its range.

I am reminded that after Miss Geraldine Farrar had read my *Fireside Book of Ghost Stories*, I asked her which of the stories she liked best. *The Sheraton Mirror*, by this same August Derleth, was one of the three or four titles she listed.

—EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

## MESSRS. STURGEON, WILLIAMSON, & DE CAMP

WITHOUT SORCERY, by Theodore Sturgeon. Introduction by Ray Bradbury. Prime Press, Philadelphia. xi., 355 pp., \$3.00.

DARKER THAN YOU THINK, by Jack Williamson. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 310 pp., \$3.00.

THE WHEELS OF IF, by L. Sprague de Camp. Shasta Publishers, Chicago. 222 pp., \$3.00.

LEST DARKNESS FALL, by L. Sprague De Camp. Prime Press, Philadelphia. 233 pp., \$3.00.

Of the three writing gentlemen whose work is represented here, Mr. Theodore Sturgeon easily leads the field, though he lacks the variety of approach and the particularly whacky kind of comedy which occasionally shows in L. Sprague De Camp. *Without Sorcery* is Mr. Sturgeon's first collection; it is a book of 13 stories, some of them quite long, including the best of his work, among them such much-anthologized pieces as *It* and *Memorial*. The remaining tales are *The Ultimate Egoist*, *Poker Face*, *Shottle Bop*, *Artnan Process*, *Ether Breather*, *Butyl and the Breather*, *Brat*, *Two Percent Inspiration*, *Cargo*, *Maturity*, and *Microcosmic God*.

In his introduction, Ray Bradbury stresses the factor which, apart from a more cogent and persuasive style than is customarily found in the pulp magazines, sets Mr. Sturgeon's work above that of most of his contemporaries—his originality of concept and performance. His stories, too, are often informed with telling wit, rather than the irresponsible zanyness affected by some writers, and they range here from delightful comedy to such a tale of utter horror as *It*, though the majority of the stories in this initial collection are science-fiction.

What must be apparent to the reader of Theodore Sturgeon's fiction, if he is at all alert, is that Mr. Sturgeon is something more than a mere entertainer, his stories offer considerable food for thought over and above their value as stories, and his prose style is more mature than that of many of his contemporaries, despite the frequency with which he uses slang, colloquialisms, and folk idiom. *Without Sorcery* must take rank among the best collections in the field published during the preceding year, and it is clear that Mr. Sturgeon will go on to even better work.

Mr. Jack Williamson, in *Darker Than You Think*, makes no pretensions whatsoever to literary value; he has set out to write an entertainment in fiction, and certainly in this he succeeds very well indeed. There is a distinct line of cleavage, and one can make no complaint about a book's shortcomings if the author has manifestly not claimed that his book is more than it is. And in this novel Mr. Williamson may be credited with adding something to the age-old lore of lycanthropy, even though his trappings are the familiar one of boy-meets-girl—ironically, in this case, lycanthrope meets lycanthrope. It all begins when Will Barbee,

reporter on hand to meet the Mondrick expedition on its return from the Gobi, first encounters April Bell, who claims to be a rival reporter. The Mondrick expedition returns with "proof" in the shape of an iron-bound chest and its strange contents that there has been waging a long war between homo sapiens and what Dr. Mondrick calls homo lycanthropus, and that occasionally in our own time there are throwbacks to lycanthropic states. The story soon develops into a chase-and-adventure feud between lycanthropic April Bell and her cohorts on the one hand and the Mondrick people on the other. Perhaps the ending of the story will surprise many readers; certainly it is at least novel. Readers who enjoy fast-moving tales of weird adventure will certainly have many reasons to enjoy *Darker Than You Think*.

Mr. L. Sprague De Camp can write, like most of us, either very well—as in *Lest Darkness Fall*—or less felicitously, as in *The Wheels of If*. *Lest Darkness Fall* is a reprint, and hence not a book about which the tried enthusiasts must be told. But this story of what happens when Martin Padway was suddenly thrust back in time to ancient Rome, using the same gambit as Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, is certainly one of the most delightful of reading experience, and easily one of the best novels on this particular theme, which can so readily be done badly, and is done here with such suavity and conviction, and with a vein of comedy that is decidedly superior to that in other works by Mr. De Camp.

*The Wheels of If*, gorgeously jacketed by Hannes Bok, is a collection of short science-fiction, stories of satire and humor, which include, in addition to the title story, these tales: *The Best-Laid Scheme*, *The Warrior Race*, *Hyperpelosity*, *The Mer-man*, *The Contraband Cow*, and *The Gnarly Man*. None has appeared in book form prior to this publication. The stories are meant, writes Mr. De Camp in his foreword, "purely to amuse and entertain, and neither (sic) to instruct, nor to incite, nor to improve." They are fast-action, slangy, whacky tales for the most part, and they do succeed in doing just precisely what Mr. De Camp means them to do, without necessarily having the weight of such a novel as *Lest Darkness Fall*. The reader who is amenable to this particular brand of entertainment will take a keen delight in the often scintillating imagination of L. Sprague De Camp, and those who like brash comedy will whoop with pleasure at many of these pages.



Each in its own niche, these four books can be recommended without hesitation to both the collector of fantasy and the common reader.

—AUGUST DERLETH

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### SHORT NOTICES

THE GIRL WITH THE HUNGRY EYES AND OTHER STORIES. Avon Publishing Company, New York. Avon Book No. 184. 127 pp., \$ .25. This paper-bound pocket-book is composed of six fantastic tales never before printed in any form. All are different and highly entertaining. The title story is by Fritz Leiber, Jr.; the others are *Venus and the Seven Sexes*, by William Tenn; *Mrs. Manifold*, by Stephen Grendon; *Daydream*, by P. Schuyler Miller; *Maturity Night*, by Frank Belknap Long; and *Come Into My Parlor*, by Manly Wade Wellman. Definitely recommended.

THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HART, by David H. Keller. National Fantasy Fan Federation. \$2.50. Published for the first time in America, this charming fantasy deserves the good reception it will undoubtedly receive, even though, unfortunately, the book is published only in a very limited edition. Subtitled "A Tale of Arcadia", it is introduced by Regis Messac, who wrote of it: "Dr. Keller is one of the privileged souls who were privileged to come back to the enchanted city again and again." Arcadia is a wonderfully strange city of romance somewhere between Paris and Madrid, a city to which no man is privileged to return or to find again, once he has left it; to it comes this novel's protagonist, after changing his name to Christopher Wren, and there he finds romance in a narrative that is filled with charm and delight. In the colophon at the end of the book, Dr. Keller has wisely written: "It is certain that Christopher Wren's life in Arcadia could be duplicated by Anyman's life in many little towns of the world. The difficulty for most of us is our inability to recognize the thrilling adventures that are constantly occurring in our everyday life." *At the Sign of the Burning Hart* presents David H. Keller in a most felicitous vein, a vein that merits deeper mining.

MYSTERIES AND ADVENTURES ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST, by Edward Rowe Snow. Dodd Mead & Company, New York. Illustrated. 352 pp., \$4.00. An excellent and most readable collection of famed Atlantic Coast mysteries—legends of treasure, travel tales, incredible stories, disasters, and such mysteries as the disappearance of ships—the *Atlanta*, the *James B. Chester*, the *Mary Celeste*, and similar mysteries. Very cogently written, this book is likely to please all those who are inveterate attendants upon any drama from real life. Mr. Snow recounts his own adventures in tracking down these tales as well. The book is something different and welcome.

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT, by Dennis Wheatley. Hutchinson & Company, London. 245 pp., 6/. Black magic and Satanism ride rampant in this exciting novel of modern London, when modern cultists ensnare a beautiful clairvoyant and arouse the protective instincts of four contemporary musketeers. Fast-moving, almost melodramatic, with a dash of Dr. Fu Manchu, and equal parts the Saint and Bulldog Drummond, and a strong overall flavor of the supernatural, this one is a natural for all lovers of excitement and suspense. For those who do not know Mr. Wheatley's work, see also *The Haunting of Toby Jugg*, *The Forbidden Territory*, *They Found Atlantis*, and others in similar vein.

### BOOKS RECEIVED

FIRES BURN BLUE, by Sir Andrew Caldecott. Longmans Green & Company, Inc., New York. 222 pages, \$2.75.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOON, 20 Tales of Science-Fiction, edited by August Derleth. Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. 466 pages, \$3.75.

DESCENT INTO HELL, by Charles Williams. Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. 248 pages, \$2.75.

UNSEEN WINGS, compiled by Stanton A. Coblentz. Beechurst Press, New York. 281 pages, \$4.50.

# EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

## *Letters to the Editor*

We are in receipt of two letters we want to pass on to our readers, and we shall probably have others for our next issue. Among the many letters of comment we received after publication of our all science-fiction issue, we have chosen Clark Ashton Smith's for reproduction here, since it seems to us to make important points which ought to be put before the science-fiction enthusiasts.

"I have read the symposium on science-fiction with great interest," Mr. Smith writes. "Since you have summed up so ably in your editorial the main deductions to be drawn, I will content myself with a few footnotes, so to speak. For one thing, is struck me that most of the contributors (Dr. Keller excepted) failed to emphasise sufficiently the historical aspect of the theme and were too exclusively preoccupied with its contemporary development. Yet surely, for the proper understanding of the genre and of fantasy in general, some consideration should be given to its roots in ancient literature, folklore, mythology, anthropology, occultism, and mysticism.

"I was quite surprised that no one mentioned Lucian, Apuleius and Rabelais among the forefathers of the genre, since all three are of prime importance. Lucian was a satirist and skeptic who, in the form of imaginative fiction, endeavored to 'debunk' the religious superstitions and contending philosophies of his time; being, one might say, somewhat analogous to Aldous Huxley, who in his turn has satirised modern science. Apuleius, borrowing a plot from Lucian in *The Golden Ass*, expressed, on the other hand, the power and glamor of a sorcery that was *regarded as science* by the moiety of his contemporaries; and his book, in its final chapter, plunges deeply into that mysticism which is seemingly eternal and common to many human minds in all epochs. The omission of Rabelais is particularly surprising, since he was not only the first of modern satiric fantaisists, but also one of the first writers to develop the Utopian theme (so much exploited since) in his phalanstery of Theleme—which, I might add, is the only fictional Utopia that I should personally care to inhabit!

"Another thing that struck me was the ethical bias shown by some of the contributors, a bias characteristic of so many science-fiction fans, as opposed to the devotees of pure fantasy. Such fans are obviously lovers of the imaginative and the fantastic,



more or less curbed in the indulgence of their predilections by a feeling that the fiction in which they delight should proceed (however remote its ultimate departure) from what is currently regarded as proven fact and delimited natural law; otherwise, there is something reprehensible in yielding themselves to its enjoyment. Without entering into the old problem of ethics plus art, or ethics versus art, I can say only that from my own standpoint the best application of ethics would lie in the sphere where it is manifestly *not* being applied: that is to say, the practical use of scientific discoveries and inventions. Imaginative literature would be happier and more fruitful with unclogged wings; and the sphere of its enjoyment would be broader.

"What pleased me most about the symposium was the prominence given to Wells and to Charles Fort, and the inclusion of your anthology, *Strange Ports of Call*. I could mention books, out of my own far from complete reading of science-fiction, that were missed or slighted by the contributors. Of these, Huxley's *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* is perhaps the most salient from a literary perspective. It is a gorgeous and sumptuous satire on the results of self-achieved immortality. Leonard Cline's *The Dark Chamber* could be mentioned, too, since it depicts with singular power the retrogression of a human being to the primal slime. Incidentally, one ought to mention Lucian's *True History*, for it contains what is probably the first interplanetary tale, a fantastic account of a voyage to the moon. And sometimes I suspect that Freud should be included among the modern masters of science-fiction! But one could multiply titles without adding anything of permanent literary value and significance."

Another correspondent has promised us an article setting forth his bases of difference with conclusions drawn about science-fiction, and if it measures up to standard, we shall presently bring it to our readers. Our second letter for this issue struck us as setting forth a point-of-view and an understanding we could wish were more general. It is from Thomas M. Sawrie, of the Department of English, East Central Junior College, Decatur, Mississippi—

"When you started the *Arkham Sampler* you probably envisioned its ultimate life span as a proleptical affair to be regulated by the nature of the response received. I had the idea that it was an experiment that had to be carried through if only to ascertain on an experimental basis whether or not it would go; whether or not there were actually enough persons who would support this exact sort of periodical. In the intervening year,

criticism has ranged from apathy to downright vituperation, and yet between these two extremes there lies a solid backlog of genuine support. Apparently there has been enough of this sort of support to warrant the continuance of the *Sampler*, and for that I am sincerely glad.

"Whatever the nature of criticism, it has served always as a revealing criticism of the critics themselves. The main problem seems to be the basic problem of adjustment. They are having to reorder their thinking to accomodate a new type of organ and any reordering of thought always seems to preface a deal of strain. If we are genuinely interested in fantasy, we should have no wish to see it chained and pinned to the wall through its association with inferior mediums. We seem to fail in the simple realization of the fact that only by achieving genuine literary worth through tight writing and honest craftsmanship can the genre sustain itself and justify its existence before a battery of critics and a general reading public which are either neutral or actively hostile. Our real interest in fantasy can be measured in direct proportion to our desire and willingness to both see it grow up and to grow up with it.

"It goes without saying that I think you have done more than any single individual to promote this growth in restoring fantasy to the mature, adult state which is rightfully its own."

#### *The New Arkham Catalog*

Publication of our Stocklist late last year was followed in March by the publication of a new catalog listing Arkham House Books "1949 and Later". This catalog will be our staple catalog until copies are exhausted. It lists no less than just under forty new books planned for publication by Arkham House or Mycroft & Moran, by authors ranging from such distinguished writers as Walter de la Mare and H. P. Lovecraft to such first authors as Howard Wandrei and E. Hoffmann Price—"first", that is, in book publication. However, apart from subscription to *The Arkham Sampler*: 1949, we are accepting advance orders for but one title not published by us, *The Other Side of the Moon* (\$3.75), and eleven Arkham House titles. These are, roughly in order: *Something About Cats and Other Pieces*, by H. P. Lovecraft (\$3); *The Throne of Saturn*, by S. Fowler Wright (\$3); *Away and Beyond*, by A. E. Van Vogt (\$4); *Gather, Darkness!*, by Fritz Leiber, Jr. (\$3); *Everett True*, by A. D. Condo (a Stanton & Lee cartoon collection par excellence, \$3); *Three Tales*, by Walter de la Mare (\$2); *Selected Letters*, by

H. P. Lovecraft (\$6.50); *A Hornbook for Witches*, by Leah Bodine Drake (\$2); *Xelucha and Others*, by M. P. Shiel (\$3); *The Green Round*, by Arthur Machen (\$2.50); and *The Purcell Papers*, by J. Sheridan LeFanu (\$3).

All patrons of Arkham House should have received their new catalogs by this time, and will thus have learned that three more titles have gone out of print since the last catalog was issued—*Who Knocks?*, edited by August Derleth; *The Opener of the Way*, by Robert Bloch; and *Green Tea and Other Ghost Stories*, by J. Sheridan LeFanu. *Something Near*, by August Derleth (\$3), *The Night Side*, edited by August Derleth (\$2.50), and *The Lurker at the Threshold*, by H. P. Lovecraft and August Derleth (\$2.50), are now in short supply and will also soon be out of print.

The new catalog contains, among photographs of S. Fowler Wright, Seabury Quinn, and others, a reproduction of *Everett True*, and a specimen page from a Lovecraft letter, containing a poem not heretofore published.

#### *Our Contributors*

Clark Ashton Smith of California is so well known to lovers of fantasy for his unforgettable stories and poems that he scarcely needs an introduction. His most recent book is *Genius Loci and Other Tales*, which will be followed by *The Abominations of Yondo*, *Tales of Science and Sorcery*, and by the *Selected Poems*. Arkham House hopes, too, to publish a new full-length novel, his first by Mr. Smith in the not too distant future . . . Vincent Starrett has perhaps more books to his credit than any other living writer, not even excepting your editor. He conducts a column, *Books Alive*, for the excellent book review section, *The Magazine of Books*, of *The Chicago Tribune*. His most recent book was a new collection of poems entitled *Brillig*.

Everett Bleiler is one of the most earnest of students fantasy can produce. His *Checklist of Fantastic Literature* is a standard reference work; it will be supplemented relatively soon by another admirable book, *A Guide to Imaginative Literature*, which Shasta Publishers have announced for 1949 publication. . . . Foreman Faulconer is a young poet whose work is just beginning to be published, and shows every evidence of achieving wider publication for him in the future. . . . E. Hoffmann Price is a well-known fantasy and adventure-story writer. Readers of the old *Weird Tales* will recall with pleasure his fine ironies in the earliest issues, and will be additionally pleased to know that Arkham House will



shortly publish his first collection, *Strange Gateways*. A friend and collaborator of the late H. P. Lovecraft, Mr. Price has an interest in subjects psychic and astrological.

John Beynon Harris is a British writer who made his initial appearance in our all science-fiction issue last quarter. His stories are beginning to be published in this country, one of them having appeared recently in *Collier's*. . . . Leah Bodine Drake, an Indiana poet, long familiar to the readers of *Weird Tales* and other magazines publishing poetry, has had her first collection, *A Hornbook for Witches*, announced for publication by Arkham House. . . . J. A. Mitchell is a writer of yesterday who had a remarkable penchant for satire. Charles Collins, conductor of the *Line-O-Type* in *The Chicago Tribune*, discovered Mitchell's science-fiction novel of the future on his shelves and sent it to Arkham House with his compliments. First published in 1889, we reproduce is here for the delectation of other connoisseurs.

August Derleth's most recent book, *The Other Side of the Moon*, a new collection of science-fiction, is his 56th. In the interval since the last issue of the magazine, he has completed first drafts of three more books—*Westryn Wind*, an historical novel of Wisconsin a century ago; *The Memoirs of Solar Pons*, a new collection of pastiches; and *The Dark House*, a romance with overtones of the supernatural; and he is now completing the novel, *The Trail of Cthulhu*. . . . P. Schuyler Miller's amplification of the background for his story, *The Thing on Outer Shoal*, is very timely, since the story itself is being reprinted for the first time in *The Other Side of the Moon*. A contributor to *Astounding Science-Fiction*, *Weird Tales*, *Unknown Worlds*, and other magazines, Mr. Miller lives in Schenectady, New York.

Joseph L. McNamara is a practicing physician with a keen interest in things fantastic. . . . Dr. Edward Wagenknecht is the distinguished scholar and critic whose many books invade numerous fields, ranging all the way from *The Cavalcade of the English Novel* to *Six Novels of the Supernatural*. His most recent book was *The Fireside Book of Yuletide Stories*, and an anthology of Victorian mysteries is to come later this year. Among his popular anthologies are *The Fireside Book of Christmas Stories* and *The Fireside Book of Ghost Stories*, an admirable collection which was recently reprinted at a price within every range. The tentative title chosen for his new collection is *Victorian Thrillers*. . . . Jack C. Miske is a college student, who has long been devoted to fantastic fiction of all kinds.



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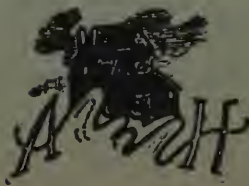
THE ONE WHO WAITS,  
a new story by Ray Bradbury

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a condensation of the novel by Lewis Holberg

"AMERICAN DREAMS" AND UTOPIAS  
an article by Everett Bleiler





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